MAXIMUM ROCK NROLL

JANUARY 2005 • #260 • $4.00

TECHNOCRACY

INSIDE: THE ERGS • THE TOTAL END • TRUE NORTH
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THE PARTISANS • ONLY CRIME • DICKIE SPIKIE
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PUNK ROCK IN CHINA & MORE

MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

For what it's worth (not much), here's some of the MRR crew's current Top 10 (or so...) lists of stuff we've reviewed this month.

TIM BROOKS

- SMALLTOWN-The Music-CD
- FRAMTID/DISCLOSE-split EP
- KEGCHARGE-Sadistic War Glory-12"
- THE ENDS-Concrete Disappointment-LP
- HAMMER-LP
- UNIFORM APPROACH-A Pledge to the Edge-EP
- BIG BOYS-Lullabies/No Matter How Long-2xLP
- LURKERS-Fulham Fallout-LP
- BALZAC-Came Out of the Grave-LP
- V/A-Ratas De Ciudad-CD

ROB COONS

- KRUW-The Punx-EP
- DISCLOSE-LP
- TOMORROW-Chiedi Troppo-LP
- HAMMER-LP
- FRAMTID/DISCLOSE-split EP
- CAUSTIC CHRIST-Government Jobs-EP
- SPEND 4-Starting Over-EP
- SWEET J.A.P-I'm Only Moonlight-45
- BIG BOYS-Lullabies/No Matter How Long-2xLP
- LOVE SONGS-live

PAUL CURRAN

- THE ERGS!-Cotton Pickin' Minute-EP
- KRUW-The Punx-EP
- BIG BOYS-Lullabies/No Matter How Long-2xLP
- SMALLTOWN-The Music-CD
- THE HECK-Nobody Knows-EP
- KRUMBUMS-Cut Into Me-EP
- HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEE TREMBLERS-EP
- THE LIDS-LP
- KOHU 63-Korkeapaineistettu Hullujenhuone-LP
- THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB-Three Way Tie-CD

JONATHAN FLOYD

MISSING IN ACTION

JEFF HEERMANN

- LOST SOUNDS-LP
- JARVIS HUMBY-Assume the Position-CD
- GUN CLUB-all reissues
- THE ULCERS-Hot Skin & Cold Cash-LP
- A-FRAMES-Complication/Frankenstein
- LURKERS-Fulham Fallout-LP
- THE SPITS-19 Million A.C.-CD
- SWEET J.A.P-I'm Only Moonlight-45
- ARMITAGE SHANKS-live
- OPERATION S - live

KENNY KAOS

- THE ULCERS-Hot Skin & Cold Cash-LP
- THE MAGGOTS-What a Girl Can't Do-45
- THE PATSYS-In and Out with You-45
- THE ENDS-Concrete Disappointment-LP
- THE LOW BUDGETS-Aim Low, Get High-LP
- THE HIDDEN CHARMS-Right Now!-EP
- THE CARBONAS-Frothing at the Mouth-EP
- THE ERGS!-Cotton Pickin' Minute-EP
- THE LIDS-LP
- THE GUV'NORS-Yob=Pop-EP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- THE ULCERS-Hot Skin & Cold Cash-LP
- LOST SOUNDS-LP / THE LIDS-LP
- KRUW-EP / A-FRAMES-Complications-45
- THE CARBONAS-Frothing at the Mouth-EP
- HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEE TREMBLERS-EP
- SWEET J.A.P-I'm Only Moonlight-45
- HIDDEN CHARMS-Right Now!-EP
- OPERATION S-live / SMIRK-live
- Jandek on Corwood-DVD
- BILL HICKS-Live-DVD

RAY LUJAN

- SMALLTOWN-The Music-CD
- DOWN AND OUTS-Boys from the Blackstuff-CD
- ACEFACE-Opening Up/Broken Homes-45
- THE DONKEYS-Television Anarchy-CD
- THE METHADONES-Not Economically Viable-CD
- THE PATSYS-In and Out with You-45
- THE ENDS-LP / JARVIS HUMBY-CD
- LEYTON BUZZARDS-The Punk Collection-CD
- SUPERHERO-Picking Up the Line-CD
- TRUE IF DESTROYED-LP

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#148, 150-151, 153-154, 156 pts. 1 & 2, 159-163, 166, 168-172, 174-175, 178-181, 184-210, 214-227, 229-256 are as stated above in subscription info.
See page after next.

DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE:
Scene Reports: continuously, with photos!
Interviews: continuously, with photos!
Ad Reservations: call to make sure.

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1/6 page: (2 3/8-x 5") $30
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1/2 page: (7 1/4-x 5") $150
Full page (7 1/4-x 10") $400

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See page 5 for foreign distribution info.

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MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

TOP 10

Please send us records (2 copies of vinyl, if possible–one for MRR and one for reviewer), or CD-only release. See records section for where to send tapes & CD-Rs.

ALLAN MCNAUGHTON

- FUCKED UP-Looking for Gold-12"
- THE CARBONAS-Frothing at the Mouth-EP
- MANIKIN-M.4-EP
- ALLEGED GUNMEN-Return to Zero-LP
- ESKE-Big Trouble in Little Village-EP
- A-FRAMES-Complications/Frankenstein-45
- LOST SOUNDS-LP / HAMMER-LP
- BIG BOYS-Lullabies/No Matter How Long-2xLP
- VEX-New Words for an Old Revolution-EP
- TOMORROW-Chiedi Troppo-LP

GOLNAR NIKPOUR

- KRUW-The Punx-EP
- FRAMTID/DISCLOSE-split EP
- THE CARBONAS-Frothing at the Mouth-EP
- NO FUCKER/DISCLOSE-both split EPs
- BIG BOYS-Lullabies/No Matter How Long-2xLP
- KARKABA-Alperrik Galdukoaiz-EP
- FUCKED UP-Looking for Gold-12"
- ESKE-Big Trouble in Little Village-EP
- HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEE TREMBLERS-EP
- A-FRAMES-Complications/Frankenstein-45

DONNA POOLE

- THE CARBONAS-Frothing at the Mouth-EP
- THE PATSYS-In and Out with You-45
- VEX-New Words for an Old Revolution-EP
- KRUW-The Punx-EP
- HIDDEN CHARMS-Right Now!-EP
- MANIKIN-M.4-EP
- MIDNIGHT TRAMP-I'm Back-EP
- SWEET J.A.P-I'm Only Moonlight-45
- THE ULCERS-Hot Skin & Cold Cash-LP
- THE ENDS-Concrete Disappointment-LP

WILL RISK

- JELLO BIAFRA W/THE MELVINS-LP & live
- FUCKED UP-Looking for Gold-12"
- ALLEGED GUNMEN-Return to Zero-LP
- ANTISEEN-Dear Abby-EP
- BIG BOYS-2xLP

MITCH CARDWELL

- THE CARBONAS-Frothing at the Mouth-EP
- A-FRAMES-Complications/Frankenstein-45
- SWEET J.A.P-I'm Only Moonlight-45
- HIDDEN CHARMS-Right Now!-EP
- ARMITAGE SHANKS-live

BRUCE ROEHRS

- THE BRUISERS -Cruisin' for a Bruisin'-LP
- ANTISEEN-Dear Abby-EP
- KRUW-The Punx-EP / HAMMER-LP
- UNIFORM APPROACH-A Pledge to the Edge-EP
- THE GUV'NORS-Yob=Pop-EP
- CAUSTIC CHRIST-Government Job-EP
- FUCKED UP-12" / KOHU 63-LP
- KEGCHARGE-Sadistic War Glory-12"
- SOCIAL DISTORTION-live
- NAPALM DEATH/CANNIBAL CORPSE-live

MIKE THORN

- ESKE-Big Trouble in Little Village-EP
- FUCKED UP-12" / CAUSTIC CHRIST-EP
- SPEND 4-EP / KRUW-The Punx-EP
- KOBAYASHI/KOYAANISQATSI-split EP
- THE PROWL-The First Room on the Left-EP
- BLOOD RUNS RED-Suicide-EP
- KARKABA-EP / THE CARBONAS-EP
- AMOEBA/7 MAGS-split LP / HAMMER-LP
- AD CALENDAS GRAECAS-Ztracis-12"
- SIGNAL LOST/OBSERVERS/IRON LUNG-live

RYAN WELLS

- A-FRAMES-Complications/Frankenstein-45
- MIKE HUDSON-Unmedicated-CD
- Q65-I Despise You/Ann-45
- HIDDEN CHARMS-Right Now!-EP
- THE ERGS!-Cotton Pickin' Minute-EP
- THE WONKY MONKEES-Singeries-LP
- HOLLY GOLIGHTLY-Slowly but Surely-LP
- THE LEECHES-Integration/Ghost Ship-45
- SWEET J.A.P-I'm Only Moonlight-45
- ARMITAGE SHANKS / OPERATION S-live

ZINE TOP TEN

- Charged Hair & Distorted Riffs #2
- Hellfire for Fucker #2
- Here It Is #2
- Living Proof #3
- Remains of a Caveman / Go Large
- Shredding Paper #18
- Smashed Images #2
- Stay Gold #7
- Sweet Olive #2
- Town of Hardcore #10

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#148/Sept ‘95. Soda Jerks, Toe Rag, Thorazine, Sacred Straight, Wizo, Opposition Party, Moody Jackson, Adversives, Opcion Crucial, Rebel, Rebel, Teen Idols, Walking Ruins.

#150/Nov '95. NY Loose, Snap-Her, Sick Boys, Splatterheads, Pipe, Pregnant Man, Final Conflict, Rawness, Stink, Goblins, Smellie Fingers.

#151/Dec '95. Lowdowns, My White Bread Mom, Queen B's, Electric Frankenstein, Turtlehead, Serpico, Trick Babys, In/Humanity, Stains, Varukers, Pist, Terrible Virtue.

#153/Feb '96. Snort, Hatchetface, Little Ugly Girls, ADZ, Oxymoron, NOTA, Stun Guns, Surfin' Turnips, Gutfiddle, Karen Monster, Dimestore Haloes.

#154/Mar ‘96. Motards, Subincision, Stisism, Donnas, Stallions, Count Backwards.

#156 pt 1/May '96. Public Toys, Crunch, Peter & The Test Tube Babies, Nails Of Hawaiian, Splash 4, Yawp!, Lifetime, Sickoids.

#156 pt 2/May '96. Australian Special: Beanflipper, Melancholy, Blitz Babiez, Crank, SubRosa, Mindsnare, TMT, H-Block, B-Sides, Fallout, Frenzal Rhomb, Lawnsmell, One Inch Punch, Chickenshit, No Deal.

#159/Aug ‘96. Smugglers, Tone Deaf Pig-Dogs, Too Many Records, Man Afraid, Blind Side, Vox Populi, Fun People, Fat, Drunk & Stupid, BrandNewUnit, Death Wish Kids.

#160/Sept ‘96. Automatics, Boycot, Toast, Morning Shakes, Mormons, John Q. Public, Sex Offenders, Ballgagger, Business, Apocalypse Babys, Good Riddance.

#161/Oct ‘96. Jet Bumpers, Steel Miners, Divisia, Lopo Drido, Red #9, Nothing Cool, Sink, Sires, Newtown Grunts.

#162/Nov ‘96. Phantom Surfers, Candy Snatchers, the Stain, National Guard, Torches To Rome, Restos Fosiles, Two Bo's Maniacs, Snuka, Redemtion 87, Torture Kitty.

#163/Dec ‘96. Last Sons of Krypton, Prostitutes, Wig Hat, Boys, Let It Rock, Enemy Soil, Vulcaneers, Half Empty, Zeros, Deadcats, Teen Idles.

#166/Mar ‘97. Walking Abortions, Hickey, ‘77 Spreads, Sanity Assassins, Cards In Spokes, Joey Tampon & The Toxic Shocks, Adjective Noun, Suicide King, Lenguas Armadas, Trauma, De Crew.

#169/June ‘97. Hand Skin, Cluster Bomb Unit, Jihad, Purgen, Speed Queens, Remission, Halflings, The Old Man, Deface.

#170/July ‘97. Bristle, Mine, Tedio Boys, The 4 Cockroaches, Absconded, Meanwhile. Broken, (Young) Pioneers, Hoodrat.

#171/Aug ‘97. Violent Society, Strychnine, Idiots, Knuckle Heads, Race Traitor, Patrick Grindstaff, Misanthropists.

#172/Sept ‘97. Withdrawals, Judgement, No Motiv, Oppressed Logic, Truents, Left For Dead, Yellowskin, Weird Lovemakers, Smash Your Face, Flatus, Straight Faced, Klaxon, X-It.

#174/Nov ‘97. Stratford Mercenaries, Lickity Split, Bladder, Piss Shivers, Barnhills, In/Humanity, Education theme issue.

#175/Dec ‘97. One Man Army, Those Unknown, Boiling Man, Piao Chong, Exploding Crustaceans, Last Year's Youth, Heartdrops, Dirty Burds, Dimestore Haloes.

#179/April ‘98. Boy Sets Fire, Tres Kids, Idyls, Spat & The Guttersnipes, The Posers, Explosive Kate, Douche Flag.

#180/May ‘98. Reinforce, Discontent, TV Killers, Slack Action, Eyeliners, Mademoiselle, MK Ultraviolence, Haulin' Ass, 97a, Infiltrators, Jack Saints, Stray Bullets.

#181/June ‘98. Grapefruit, Druggies, DDI, Bonecrusher, Normals, All Bets Off, Stiletto Boys, Summerjack, Cell Block 5.

#184/Sept ‘98. Absentees, Devoid of Faith, UXA, Ümlaut, Four Letter Word, Streetwalkin' Cheetahs, Ricanstruction, Libertine, Indecision, Snarkout Boys.

#185/Oct ‘98. Traitors, Wimpy Dicks, Armed & Hammered, Dylan McKays, NME, Tezacrifco, Worm, Roswells, Raxola, Beatnik Termites.

#186/Nov ‘98. Registrators, August Spies, Marilyn's Vitamins, Chinese Love Beads.

#187/Dec ‘98. Real Kids, Sawn Off, Cretins, Spider Cunts, Heroines, Third Party, No Class, Skabs.

#188/Jan ‘99. Stitches, Neighbors, Mansfields, Real Swinger, Marauders, Mark Bruback, Mars Moles, DOA.

#189/Feb ‘99. Monster X, Peter & the Test Tube Babies, Steam Pig, Maurauders, Yakuza, Dead Beat, Halfways, Hot Rod Honeys, DeRita Sisters.

#190/Mar ‘99. John Holstrom, Powerhouse, Brezhnev, Slappy, Black Pumpkin, Smartbomb ca, Wanda Chrome, Long Gones, Smogtown, Halfways, Tilt.

#191/April ‘99. Murder Suicide Pact, Kil Kare, Dudman, Super Hi-Fives, Better Than Elvis DJs, Pet Peeves, Loose Ends, Slingshot Episode.

#192/May ‘99. Los Crudos, Burning Kitchen, Henry Fiat's Open Sore, Polythene, Kangaroo Recs.

#193/June ‘99. Munster Recs, DS-13, Safety Pins, Pussycats, Piolines, False Alarm, Darlington, Bad Stain, Bodies, Houseboy, Mullets.

#194/July ‘99. Deathreat, Last Match, God Hates Computers, Fokkewolf, Flesh Eating Creeps, Aside, Hoppin' Mad, Kid Dynamite, Thee Outcasts.

#195/Aug ‘99. Moral Crux, RC5, Have Nots, Ill Tempered, Dysentery, Greg Higgins, Revlons, Larry & the Gonowheres..

#196/Sept ‘99. Hopscotch, Catharsis, Orchid, The Pricks, Grissle, Product X, Reaching Forward, Emerge, Third Degree, “Epicenter Zone ‘90-‘99”.

#197/Oct ‘99. Reducers SF, Lower Class Brats, Reactor 7, TheGodsHateKansas, Futuro Incierto, Showcase Showdown, Waifle, Flat Earth Recs.

#198/Nov ‘99. Hail Mary, Pressure Point, Bump ‘N Uglies, The Victims, A//Political, Outlast

#199/Dec ‘99. Locust, Ratos de Porao, USV, Razlog Za, G-3, Swarm, WHN?, Mt. St. Helens, Black Cat Music, Enemy Soil.

#200/Jan ‘00. American Steel, Curse, Gee Vaucher, Hers Never Existed, Aaron Cometbus, Active distro, Toxic Narcotic, MRR catalogue #100-200.

#201/Feb ‘00. Beerzone, Towards An End, Daybreak, “Best Punk Singles of the ‘90s,” the WTO riots in Seattle.

#202/March ‘00. KTMWQ, Real Estate Fraud, Strike Out, Broken Rekids, the Haggard, GC5, Gore Gore Girls, the Catheters.

#203/April ‘00. Spazz, Slang, *Slug & Lettuce* zine, *Suburban Voice* zine, As We Once Were, Red Angel Dragnet, Four Letter Words, Slampt Records, the Wednesdays, the Fuses.

#204/May ‘00. Cocksparrer, Talk Is Poison, Red Scare, Put Downs, Out Cold, Geraldine, Michael Knight, CBGaV, Pillage People.

#205/June ‘00. Punks With Kids special. Skudz, 50 Million, Legion, Wilbur Cobb, Coalition.

#206/July ‘00. Drunk, ESL, Ambition Mission, Lord High Fixers, Cripple Bastards, Dig Dug, Federation X, Amulet, Valentine Killers.

#207/Aug ‘00. Harum Scarum, Raw Power, Unseen, Pekinska Patka, Hudson Falcons, Dementia 13, Confine, Allergic to Whores.

#208/Sept ‘00. Le Shok, the Commies, the Chemo Kids, Day of Mourning, Affront, Diaspora, Whippersnapper, Hopeless/Sub City, Prank, Countdown to Oblivion

#209/Oct ‘00. Loose Lips, Godstomper, Peace of Mind, FYP, I Farm, Annalise, Cattle Decapitation, Riot/Clone.

#210/Nov ‘00. J Church, Profane Existence, Pezz, Pre-Teens, Templars, This Machine Kills, Subtonix, OB.

#214/Mar ‘01. Crispus Attucks, Fetish, Lifes Halt, Mr. Roboto, Dream Dates, Satan McNugget, Havoc, Briefs.

#215/April ‘01. No Means No, Vitamin X, Injections, Y, Dils, Last In Line, Don Austin, Deranged Records

#216/May ‘01. Propagandhi, Angelic Upstarts, Discordance Axis, Ruination, Photographer: Chris Boarts, Strap-Ons, Lynnards Innards

#217/June ‘01. Joey Ramone R.I.P., Tear It Up, Skitsystem, The Pattern, CrimethInc., Esperanza, The Chicago Blackout, Photographer: Ace

#218/July ‘01. Guyana Punchline, Les Sexareenos, The Devil Is Electric, Red Monkey, White Collar Crime, Forca Macabra, The Ataris, Suicide, The Mob

#219/Aug ‘01. “Fix It!” cycling article, Crucial Unit, Lost Sounds, Lombardies, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 1, Casualties, Resinators, *P.U.N.K.*, Slaughter & the Dogs, Anti-Flag, Dontcares, S’Bitch.

#220/Sep ‘01. Latin American Issue. Aubuso Sonoro, Anti-Todo, Fuerza X, Apatia No, Manganzoids, Demencia, Sick Terror, Tocatta y Bulla, NTN, Argies, Reconcile, Anti-Korpus, Ruido De Odio, Los Pepiniyos, Rebelion Disidente, Brazil Scum , Kim Bae Photo Essay.

#221/Oct ‘01. Tales from the G8 Summit, Reflections, Soophie Nun Squad, Totalitär, True North, Wontons, Sin Dios, Bottles & Skulls, Scarred For Life, Flowers in the Dustbin pt. 2, Remains of the Day, Ritchie Whites, B’67.

#222/Nov ‘01. Dios Hastio, Tragedy, Four Letter Word, *Salad Days* author Charles Romalotti, Very Metal, Maurice’s Little Bastards, the Rotters, MDC Brazilian tour diary, the Cravats, JR Ewing, Dutch scene report, extended news section, “Globalization Rhetoric & Reality,”

#223/Dec ‘01. “US Policy in the Middle East,” “Revisiting 1948,” Manifesto Jukebox, Good Riddance, Pokers, Viimenen Kolonna, Bluebloods, Vitamin X tour diary, Flakes, Pg. 99, the Mob, 7 Days of Samsara.

#224/Jan ‘02. “Legislation Since Sept. 11,” Rendencion 9.11, Metro Youth, Severed Head of State, Piranhas, Paraf, Backstabbers, Inc, An Albatross, Citizen Fish Tour, SPAM Records, the Virus, Action Time.

#225/Feb ‘02. Lengua Armada, Breaker Breaker, 3 Yrs. Down, Scrotum Grinder, Turun Tauti, Flux Of Pink Indians, Holding On, Pauki, 86’d, See You In Hell, Red Light Sting, Nazis From Mars, Scare Tactic.

#226/Mar ‘02. Queer punk special issue. Vaseline, Quails, Skinjobs, Italian queer punk report, Vaginal Davis, Feelings on a Grid, Sissies, Scott Free, Dumba, Columns.

#227/Apr ‘02. Bellrays, Rhinos, Wasted, Kristofer Pasanen, Business, Assert, DS 13 tour report, Life Set Struggle, Iowaska, Zounds.

#229/June ‘02. Countdown To Putsch, The Awakening, Dave Hill Distribution, Holier Than Thou, Kill Devil Hills, Sound Of Failure, E.T.A., Nubs, Les Baton Rouge, New Disorder Records, Career Suicide, Swellbellys, The Sinyx.

#230/July ‘02. Bitchin’, Redencion 911, Phantom Limbs, Secretions, Holy Molar, Sharp Knife, Mighty John Waynes, A Global Threat, Groovie Ghoulies, Reproach, Annie Anxiety.

#231/Aug ‘02. Epoxies, Puppy Vs. Dyslexia, Koro, Blocko, Amdi Petersen’s Armé, Piss & Vinegar Zine, Schizophrenic Records, Toys That Kill, Give Us Barabbas, Dirt.

#232/Sept ‘02. “No Future” article, Lost, Fartz, Sell Outs, Razors Edge, Stakeout, Dillinger Four, All or Nothing HC, Fleshies, Bridge Nine Records, Akashic Books, Liberty.

#233/Oct ‘02. “All Ages” article, Scholastic Deth, Runnamucks, Sinners & Saints, Panic, Gasolheads, Jewws, Futures, Michael Landon’s Commandos, Storm the Tower, Against Me!, Balance of Terror, Class Assassins, Spazm 151.

#234/Nov ‘02. Snobs, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour, The Oath, Radio 4, Feederz, Charm City Suicides, Selfish, Riot 99, End On End, Peawees, Born/Dead.

#235/Dec ‘02. Anti-war Special Issue. Anti-war guest columns. Anti-war scene reports. Articles: “Reading for Democracy,” “War on Iraq?” “Unfinished American Revolution,” Resource Guide, ”US Involvement in Iraq,””Axis of Empire.” Long Island DIY Scene, What Happens Next? Brazilian tour part 2, Smalltown, Kylesa, Crash & Burn.

#236/Jan ‘03. Mr. California & State Police, Iron Lung, Riff Randells, Chainsaw, *Artcore*, Latterman, Travis Cut, Phenomenauts, Pretty Little Flower, X-Cretas.

#237/Feb ‘03. Top Ten Records of 2002, “Music as a Weapon: Artists in Wartime,” Dirt Bike Annie, Let It Burn, Stockyard Stoics, King Khan & Shrines, 625 Records, Feast Or Famine, Rudimentary Peni, Coachwhips, Self Defense.

#238/Mar ‘03. World Burns To Death, Chronics, Vilently Ill, Dystopia, Pilger, Exotic Fever, Brezhnev, R.A.M.B.O., Blown To Bits, Put To Shame, Deconditioned, This Bike Is A Pipe Bomb, Monsters.

#239/Apr ‘03. Romanian D-beat, Meconium Records, Amazombies, Abandoned Hearts Club, Mike V. & the Rats, Nicki Sicki, Bigamists, Bolivia article, Negatives, Kuolema, Defiance.

#240/May ‘03. I Quit, Apers, Headless Horsemen, Lesser of Two, Barse, Nightmare, Music Zine Roundtable, Exploding Hearts, Flesh Packs, Blacklist Brigade.

#241/June ‘03. Tyrades, Lumbergh, The Stand By Me, New Mexican Disaster Squad, Cut the Shit, Libertinagem, 17th Class, the Ends, He Who Corrupts, Deathbag, Cria Cuervos.

#242/July ‘03. Pensacola and San Francisco punk protest reports, John Wilkes Booze, Anfo, Bob Suren, Migra Violenta, Jackson 8, *Snakepit* zine, Krigshot, the Rites, Deadfall.

#243/Aug ‘03. “Media Alliance and the FCC,” Striking Distance, Malcontents, Invisible City, Books Lie, Charm City Art Space, Hopeless Dregs of Humanity, I Shot Cyrus, Sunday Morning Einsteins, What the Kids Want, Onion Flavored Rings.

#244/Sept ‘03. None More Black, Deadline, Rai Ko Ris, Boxed In, Exploding Hearts, Raving Mojos, Blackout Terror, Morticia’s Lovers, Thee Fine Lines, *Trust* zine.

#245/Oct ‘03. No Time Left, Riistetyt, Intense Youth, The Gimmies, Ass End Offend, Artimus Pyle, La Fraction, Kung Fu Rick, The Horror.

#246/Nov ‘03. Punk & Resistance in Israel, Letters from Palestine, No Choice, FM Knives, Bury the Living, Marked Men, The Dirty Burds, Provoked.

#247/Dec ‘03. DSB, The Boils, Popular Shapes, Phoenix Foundation, Bathtub Shitter, Meet the Virus, Cropknox, “Punk Babies on Tour” Article.

#248/Jan ‘04. Discharge, Superhelicopter, Jed Whitey, Black Friday ‘29, Find Him And Kill Him, The Lids, Impratical Cockpit, Face Up To It, History Of Maximum Rocknroll Radio.

#249/Feb ‘04. From Ashes Rise, Hagar the Womb, This Is My Fist, Skip Jensen, Gride, Katy Otto/Mike Taylor Dialogue, John Yates, Pointing Finger.

#250/Mar ‘04. Best Records of 2003, Miami FTAA protests, Clorox Girls, FIYA, “La Villita: Chicago Pilsen Scene,” Terminus Victor, Restarts, Damage Done, Knights of New Crusade.

#251/April ‘04 The Fuse!, Väkivaltaa, Modern Machines, Microcosm, Migra Violenta Euro tour diary, Allegiance, Neurotic Swingers, Xavier Lepaige Photos, Le Scrawl,Vrah

#252/May ‘04 Fucked Up, Firestarter, Inepsy, Laukaus, Great Clearing Off, Radio Reelers, Extreme Noise Records, 46 Short, The State, John The Baker, Free Verse, Chrystaei Branchaw photos, SE Asia, Germany, Iceland.

#253/June ‘04 Sweet J.A.P., Gorilla Angreb, Vöetsek, Minority Blues Band, Scruvy Dogs, Molotov Cocktail, Kidnappers, Schifosi, King Ly Chee, YDI, Texas, Germany, UK, New Hampshire

#254/July ‘04 No Hope For The Kids, Dropdead, Diskords, Breakfast, Asschapel, I Excuse, Strung Up, To Hell & Back, Four Eyes, Lamant, Gammits MW, Portland, Boston, Germany

#255/August ‘04 Punks Not Dead, Reagan Is Special Issue. Leatherface, Get It Away, The Hatepinks, Keen Monkey Work, New York City, South Dakota, Czech Republic, Philippines, Russia.

#256/September ‘04 The Observers, Witchhunt, Annihilation Time, Zann, Eskapo, FxPxO, Haymarket Riot, Fourth Rotor, Les Georges Lenigrad, Texas scene, Newfoundland scene, Indiana scene, and England scene.

#257/October ‘04 Tne Election Issue, Jesse Townley, Matt Gonzalez, Rattus, Fighting Dogs, Hero Dishonest, Kickz, The Boss Martians, Reactionary Three, Slovakia, Australia, South Wales, South East Asia, and more!

#258/November ‘04 Career Suicide, Cathy Wilkerson of the Weather Underground, No Fucker, The Repos, Dominatrix, Ashtray, Deadstop, Midnight Creeps, Michale Graves, The Diffs, The Shemps, Abi Yo Yo’s.

#259/December ‘04 Bad Business, Penelope Houston, Rambo, AI, Ass, I Attack, The Krunchies, A-Lines, Insurgence Records, The Hates, Accidents, Massgrav, The Critics, Merciless Game, SF Hotel Workers Strike, Buffalo Scene Report, Photos from Japan, SoCal & The Bay Area,

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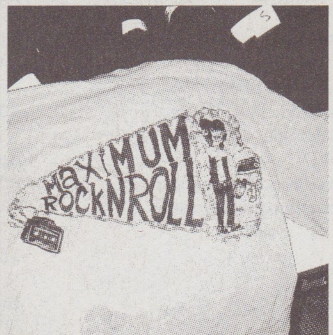

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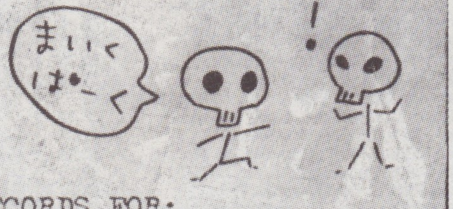

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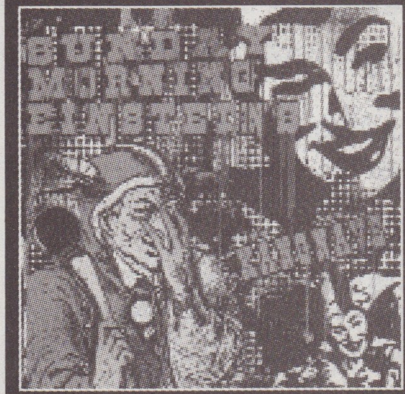

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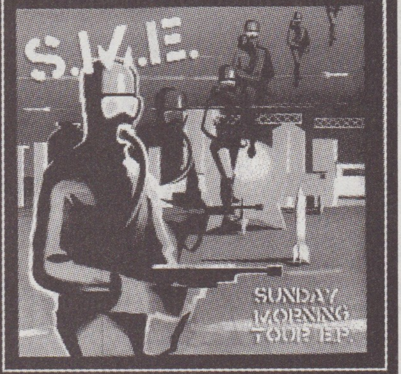

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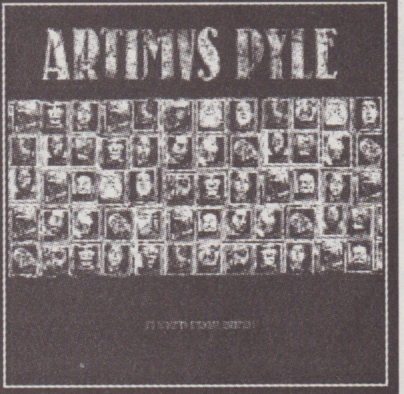

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MRR—

This is my first time writing to *MRR.* I am responding to a quote from one of the columns in the October issue.

"You dress all normal and shit, but you're the most punk rock person I know"—from the lead singer of the Casualties to the columnist.

It was refreshing to hear a punk talk about punk rock as something you are and do rather than something you say or look like. At the same time I was also disturbed by the quote because I feel this sentiment is rapidly disappearing.

There is a current tendency among punks to focus more on determining what is not punk and who are the posers rather than expressing what is punk through music, politics, etc. Perhaps this is caused by the desire to retain some semblance of originality in a world that has been de-revolutionized by mass media. And this struggle for originality has become a battle for authenticity.

A lot of punks call me a poser because I am going to school to study political science. I dress like a punk, I go to shows, and I'm in a punk band, but I also devote my time to going to school. I do not believe I am a poser. I'm not studying law to be a tax attorney or to make a bunch of money. I feel that to change the direction of American politics I must understand political theory from multiple points of view. I feel that I can use what I learn to help people who are oppressed by the politics of the neo-liberal regime right now, at this very moment. I also feel that I can bring an alternative point of view to higher institutions of learning. The struggle is, typically, understood by punks, so why not spread the word?

But I am not writing to justify myself. I believe in what I am doing.

I'm writing because I love punk rock. I became involved in it because I love the energy, the politics, and the diversity of the people. To me, punk rock encompasses diverse interests. Punks are different kinds of people active in different ways to achieve different goals. We have a reverence for freedom, which allows us to peruse our interests whether they be political, social, moral, or whatever. Punk's egalitarian philosophy leads to a great system of education. So many punks have and are developing ways to reach out to people through music, politics, etc.

I am writing to say that it's time to stop persecuting each other. I might never have heard punk rock if the first punk I ever met had shunned me for being ignorant rather than introduced me to his scene. Today, the very essence of freedom is being undermined by the proliferation of an infectious hegemonic ideology. An alternative mind is rare in this culture that is sustained by systematic indoctrination. It is something to be shared, not protected.

—Zebra
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MRR—

First off, thanks for reviewing my book in your December 2004 issue. But it seems as though Travis doesn't like poetry. Why give him the book to review?

Give books to someone informed on the subject to give it a fair review. From the beginning, Travis is confused as to what genre of poetry this book is, who I am, and what the entire book was about. His review seems as though he judged the book right away, and was determined to over criticize it. He seems more pissed that I misspelled Morrissey (that's the editor's job, not mine) than anything else. The guy totally missed the point. He goes so far as to say who will enjoy the book, but again misses the mark. If he had said, "Queers, trannies, and twelve-steppers will enjoy the book," he would have been a lot closer. The book begins with drinking and ends in sobriety. Travis seems more like a frustrated, bitter, unpublished poet than anything else.

It's like someone complaining about a Ramones record because they use the same chords repeatedly. Or that the singer's voice in Filth doesn't sound like Celine Dion's. Or they went to a Blatz show and got spit on. Or the All You Can Eat show wasn't serious. I think you get the idea.

Honestly, as long as it has the cover and publishing info right, I'm pleased. *MRR* did an interview with me back in 92 or so which helped me out a lot. I used reviews of my chapbooks (one of the few places that would review such publications) for future blurbs.

Up until the death of Dave McCord, there were a lot of exciting writers in the poetry scene who crossed over with the punk ethos. I hesitate to refer to us as Punk Poets for reasons that would take a long time to describe. I'm one of the last ones from that era. There was a long sad lull in the scene. Now, there is a new generation of young writers emerging, and small press publishing is bigger than ever. Thanks for your support of AK Press, Last Gasp, Manic D Press, Gorsky, Soft Skull, Akashic, and all the other small presses that are doing fabulous work.

—Bucky Sinister
author, *Whiskey and Robots*

—MRR—

Long time Florida punk Dave Rat was murdered October 24th in Tampa, attending a show of all things. A Florida band from the Ft. Lauderdale area was playing their 20th anniversary gig at the New World Brewery in Tampa. By all rights this should have been a non-event, a mere ripple in the waters of Tampa. Circumstances, however, conspired to make this show one of the worst nights out in Tampa scene memory. I was not present at the show or even in Florida for that matter. But from what I understand, this band launched into a Fugazi cover and someone approached one of the mics uninvited to lend a hand with back up vocals. Someone in the bands entourage would have none of it and tried to put a stop to it. The ensuing melee resulted in the would-be singer being stabbed twice and Dave fatally stabbed in the heart. All accounts place Dave attempting to break up the fight.

The role of peacemaker was completely characteristic of Dave. Originally from Stuart on Florida's east coast, Dave was central figure in the Fl punk rock scene going back to the 80s. Anyone remotely familiar with the Tampa scene of that era knew of Dave Rat. Trying to navigate Tampa in those days would ultimately put you in touch with Dave—Tampa's unofficial ambassador. He always had the lines and who was playing and where the parties were and could usually find someone to put you up. Dave's dynamic personality made him one of the most well known punks from Tampa. He introduced me to key people in every Florida scene. He had a knack for diffusing volatile situations and was quick to break up fights and decry violence. Dave eventually left the bay area to live in the Carolinas. While I don't know all of the factors in Dave's decision to move, I do know he had grown disillusioned with Tampa Bay due to the rising skinhead population and attendant violence. Regrettably, I only saw Dave a couple of times since he returned to Tampa. Despite the maturity that comes with age he, was still the fun loving ladies man that I had known back in the day. Those days are long gone and most, if not all of the members of that scene have gone their separate ways. Grown up, given up, matured, moved on and lost touch not withstanding there has been an outpouring of emotional sentiment for our slain friend. It comes as little surprise to witness all the people—punk rock and otherwise—who have come out of the woodwork to express grief and outrage. He touched a number of lives and had a positive impact on nearly everyone he met. I do not know the jackass that did this. Since the incident rumors abound about him. Everything from: he is a sharp, to an ex-bonehead, to a navy commando, and all sorts of shit. Whatever. What I do know is he has been charged with murder in the second degree and a couple of drug felonies. As much as I hate to see the police get a hold of anyone, I can't envision any circumstances that would warrant killing someone. Nor can I conceive of anyway this guy can cobble together the right combination of excuse and alibi. Or even come up with a convincing lie to get out of this—I hope he pays for killing my friend. Dave will be sorely missed not only in Tampa but in every city where he was known.

—Helmut
Portland, OR

MRR—

Thanks for a great review of our newsletter, *Living Mobile*! An unconventional vehicle is a mobile dwelling which often is self-built, and usually defies any category. For example, JK sold his 1953 Dodge step van, and built his home into a 22' box truck. Our correct address is: *Living Mobile*, Suite # 108, York, Pa 17404-4952. And please check out Living Mobile.Internetrader.com.

—The folks at *Living Mobile*
jward236@mmode.com

MRR and all punx—

Please beware, as .the label Enslaved Records has a new policy of ripping people off. It saddens me to write this, as I always considered them to be good people, but nearly two years ago my good friend Bob at Sound Idea placed an order for 30 DS13 7"s, which still have not arrived. Despite both of us trying to contact Nick he either gives lame excuses or sends no reply at all. I now notice his e mail has been disabled. Why have I gotten involved? I hate thieves, especially ones who claim to be punx. Plus, I rate Bob as one of the last of the good guys. Our underground is all we have, lets not destroy it. Thanx for your time

PS: Goodbye Stig. We didn't always agree, but we still got on.

—Pat Terrorain
Joolzlaw30@aol.com

MRR—

I just wanted to drop a quick letter with a word of advice to any young male punks out there. It may sound like an odd thing to say but *register for selective service*! I'm sure there are some of you that are thinking I should turn in my Discharge records in shame, but hear me out. All males in the United States are supposed to register when they turn eighteen. I never did, it's been about ten years now and I never really thought much of it. In fact, I don't know if I didn't register out of an attempt to fuck the system or just cause I was too busy to bother. I think at some point it may have crossed my mind that I never registered, but I figured, "oh well, I guess I'll see what happens." Well, nothing did until recently. I was lucky enough to get through college without having to borrow money, but I just started graduate school and finally decided to take the plunge and get a loan. Well guess what? I am ineligible for *any* sort of federally funded loan—that includes student loans, Pell grants, etc. If you know anything about the expenses involved in grad school, then you can understand how fucked I am. If you are over eighteen and haven't registered there is a little hope, you can actually register up until you are 25 with no penalties. Unfortunately for me, that passed me by several years ago. I know some folks may not register because of draft concerns but all I can say is if they want you I'm sure they'll come after you no matter what. If the draft is reinstated (and with this being the day after bush was reelected...fuck!), I'll personally give a carload of folks rides to the Canadian border, or you can hide out at my place. So again, I'm not supporting selective service, just trying to give a warning to any other punks out there that might be thinking of getting loans sometime in the future. I got fucked over and wish someone had warned me. Thanks. Stay pissed, stay punk.

—Evan Garner
3500 Hardy St. #42
Hattiesburg, MS 39402
evanontour@hotmail.com

MRR—

I am in total shock right now. Greg Shaw has passed away. For those of you that don't know who Greg was, you know absolutely nothing about punk rock, and therefore you should Fuck Off and Die!

—Bonedog.
Papapunk@aol.com

Maxi Rocker—

Well, holy shit was I more pissed than the S.H.A.R.P.s at the Henderson Elks lodge in the early 90's when nazi skinheads showed up to a hardcore gig. Yes, somehow my computer was infected with a virus, but do you think this kind of crap will stop me from writing retarded letters to *MRR*, hell no! Being a yuppie punk rocker I went and did the next best thing to fixing my computer—I charged a new one, so that my kids can pay for it when I die in 60 or so years.

It was a night like any other night, I walked into the Double Down Saloon & "I Against I" from the Bad Brains was blasting from the jukebox, & I headed straight to the bar. I say to the bartender, "Two Coors Lights please!" I repeat this six or so more times until I feel my bladder fill up with Coors Light nectar. My girlfriend the Bethanator got done doing her volunteer work for the Democrat party so we had lots of George Bush hate to talk about. When the conversation was winding down, I excused myself because I had to go to the little hardcore boys room. Hell Yes! The bathroom was empty the only thing in it was graffiti & stickers of shitty bands no one knows of or cares about. I made my way to the urinal, grabbed a hold of my tiny wiener & sprayed out six or so Coors Lights worth of urine & let me tell you it felt good, maybe even better than ejaculating. Nothing could be better, nothing could ruin this good time, shit I got my good times, & good tunes! Well—o—well, my perfect world came crashing to an end. I felt some warm liquid on my leg, at first I thought it was my own pee splashing on myself, but this was to much to be splash back, I look to my right & there is some drunk mother fucker dressed like a pilot pissing on me. I guess he was drunk & slightly fell over but caught his balance at the last minute, but their was still a casualty my leg, covered in his warm peanut oil smelling urine. This was so gross to me I wanted to fucking barf. The guy apologized to me & said, "I'm so sorry," I wanted to pummel him but I knew I wanted to be drunk as him & I knew it was an accident so I let it slide so the only thing I did was say to him, "You fucking pissed on me!" I left the bathroom grossed out. I sat down at the table next to Bethanator, I told her, "Feel my leg it's silky." She felt my leg & said, "it feels wet." I then told her what just happened & that she had another mans urine on her hand.

The thing that pissed me off the most about to the guy who pissed on me is not the fact that he peed on me, it's the fact he was dressed up as a pilot for Halloween at the Double Down. This troubles me because I couldn't figure out if this was his image all year round or just a Halloween costume—either way, fuck him.

One last thing about this guy urinating on me. This was *un*-consensual! If me & him had been fucking earlier & he wanted to step it up a notch by bringing in the good old golden shower into the fucking swing of things, that would have been great, but no he pissed on me & we didn't even get to embrace each other.

The night of the pissing wasn't a whole loss I did see two amazing bands, Shapes Of Race Cars & Tsar, play. I think all you fuckers should check these bands out, but if not, who cares half of you are posers who will be down on the punk scene before you're out of high school, another fourth of you guys who read *MRR* probably only like shitty bands that play really fast thrash crap & then you got the only readers that count, the fourth that like punk for punks sake like Opie Muddle.

Next time I write I will tell you guys all about the dead body I found after the crappy Skinny Puppy gig I went to. That Dead body was cool. Until next time my suggestion for a 90s gem to rock out to is the Funeral Oration album, *Believer*. Also what's up with the decline of shitty four-paged fanzines that look like 4th graders made them? Someone make one & send it to me, Satan dammit!

I have to go. I have to lift weights & jog six miles, since I'm drunk this will suck! Make sure you contact me at lasvegashardcore@aol.com & please kids do not become straight edge ever, it's more fun to do drugs & experiment with different types of genitals!

Fuck You & See You In The Pit!

—Karl Bakla

P.S. My pick for worst-ever underground 7" goes out to Baby Gopal's three-song 7" on Get Go Records, what's your?

MRR—

I write to report another loss in what I will remember as a black month in punk history. Modesto Agriarte, also know as Tío Modes or El Metralleta, guitarist of the seminal Spanish punk band La Banda Trapera del Río, passed away on November 1st at the age of 47. He was the victim of a long running pancreatic illness.

All the curriquis de barrio will miss your killer guitar.

—Paco

London

MaximumRnR Crue—

Greetings to Golnar! Such a badass name, I swear there's a Dungeouns & Dragons wizard name in there somewhere. Neil Wiener here, writing exclusively from the prison cages of California. It's been awhile since I dropped a line. Last time I did it was for the prisoner's column, which I noticed has been absent for sometime. I remember months back, Arwen stated that if space allowed it, this would pop up here and there. Is this column still a part of *MRR*? I was planning to write one about my current situation, but not knowing its status, thought to shoot this letter instead.

This last year for me has been one full of trials and errors alike, and I've been forced to dig deep within and scrounge up what defiant powers I could to bolster my eroding hopes from being washed away. My health and physical framework has had a long history of fighting to survive, began millennia ago (it seems) when I discovered the joys of drugs as a pre-teen throw away. Through the years of incardination, harder drugs, needle fetishes and OD's, my body has been hung out to dry and a prime candidate for a toe tag and body bag. A few years ago on a routine prison physical my trip to the quacks blossomed into grim tidings when I got diagnosed with Hep C.

It fucked me up then, but I learned a lot about the disease after and realized its an epidemic that has been allowed to taint the blood of a huge percentage of the harrowingly overgrown prison population, the poor and the street dwellers. Yeah, punk rock.

With a dirty liver near exploding like good ol' Bob's, I set out to live a cleanly new chemical free life. The truth is though, intoxication has been around me for my whole life, both friend when there were none, and enemy even when I had too many. Drinking prison tier wine is about as smart as a Rupture song, but feeling the warm sensation of alcohol burn always makes me feel better.

My conclusion? I ain't got straight edge.

A few bouts of druggie relapses laid me up in my bunk all fuckin' Smiths depressed and emo as fuck. All the amazing punx worldwide I had met through zines and networking finally gave up writing when my shroud of silence grew loud enough to be impossible to ignore. Lucky for me I have a few people who love me even through my madness and continue to stick around.

Self therapy of black metal, writing zines on black metal and drinking and blowing pot to black metal dug me out of the quagmire and I stepped into a new era of me...and the results came back that I had melanoma, malignant skin cancer. Damn, I do believe I can officially snatch that "King of Bad Luck" title from Mike Ness now; obviously he doesn't need it any longer. I mean who really believes those songs any more anyway?

I came up with a list of likely ways I would die, you know, to pass the time one day. I was feeling sick from radiation therapy and the top three were painful cancerous full body shut down, acute liver failure and BMO (black metal overdose, it's rare, but no less deadly!). Altogether, it seemed I still had many years ahead to blast through life and hear many more crust punk bands pay glory to Discharge.

See, I've wanted to make it through these remaining years of my prison sentence so I can go home to my pale-faced death rock wife, a teenage daughter I don't know, and a decade long collaboration of art, zines and thought resistance with the man that taught me queer companionship. Start a band, get a dog, and fix these penitentiary tattoos, finally order some fuckin' records from Six Weeks and Hardcore Holocaust. Travel the nation, get a motorcycle and put out a book of all the zines that Richard helped me put out while I was in the joint. You know, do the good stuff. Then when the inevitable hand of the Crimson Ghost came to claim me, I'd be content with the legacy I left, knowing I had loved all I could, got to know my daughter, created up to the end and had walked the treacherous road of life without missing much. Is that too much to ask? And the winner is...

The morning was just another in the string of monotony that had become my daily program. Get up, go to work, go back to the cell, blast some Blitz or Mayhem, read nerdy fantasy books, jack off, sleep do it again. But even the gray morning didn't open my eyes enough, and maybe I was trying to remember Conan O'Brian's monologue from the prior night or the lyrics to some metal ballad, but I didn't notice anything until the deed was done.

The razor slid into my neck flesh like a hot knife through a slab of tofu. It was painless but wet, and by the time I realized some dude had snuck up behind me and sliced me up, he was getting away. I saw a tattoo I remembered from young days long ago, when gang bangers and stupid loyalties swam about me, and jail house race riots and stabbings played out like slo-mo before my eyes that were swelling shut. Fuck. My hand came away from my neck. Bloody, each crease of my palm a rivulet of Crayola red. And I thought, will I ever out live this concrete world of insanity?

If it's the last thing I do, I'm gonna survive, even with each blow pushing me further into callousness, into hardened anger, into hunger for retribution, into cynicism...I'm gonna step out of these walls and leave behind the animal of instinct that survived it.

I'm in the hole now, waiting to transfer to a new prison...Oh the joy. I wake up to cold food slid on a tray through a door slot and eat on the same bunk I slept on. And I look out at razor wire and cinder block...and see that killer sunrise. I know, it's another day closer to getting out. One more scar added to the black 'n' blue tattooed story, told in the very skin and bones of my striving determination and written in the wrinkles around my eyes. Know how I got them? Smiling too much.

Thanks to all the folx who've written me cool letters and for not using terms like "keep yer head up." Heard that shit a million times. Thanks for being around.

Gonna be working on my zines while waiting in the hole, would love your zine to read and to review. To all my folx in the overflowin' US joints, me and my buddy Rob run Fanorama Society zine distro, which gives a bunch of prisoner zines free to locked up punx. Free world punkers please order our zines to help us keep poor prisoner's voices heard! Write to: 109 Arnold Ave, Cranston, RI 02905, USA—sorry, but we cannot at this time add any zines to our distro.

Lastly, it's great to see the metal side of shit hailed in column form once more, and Elliott Lange is a great dark soul punk for the job! And to the band Mangina and their "At War with Black Metal" EP (reviewed November #258), goes these words, "I need to die for my black metal pride? You seriously think you're worth my time? Dude, your jokes remind me of the Confederacy of Scum, man I gotta polish my wrist spikes, so gotta run!"

Life's just a pain in the neck!
—Carpathian Crusty!
Neil Wiener, Wiener Society & Obscene Emission Zines
Neil Edgar #K61832
C-12-202
PO Box 409000
Ione, CA 95640
PS Spooky, I miss you. All my love. See you soon!

Neil—
We do still accept prisoner guest columns, and run them when we get them. Feel free to send columns our way and—space permitting—you'll see more prisoner guest columns in the future.
—Golnar

MRR—
Please read below about a recent robbery of the sock and thermals money that the San Francisco Needle Exchange was going to use to buy warm clothes for its participants for Christmas. Dig into those pockets. Dig deep. This program is amazing, and it needs your support.

"Hello everyone, Just when you thought that it couldn't get worse over here at HAYOT/SFNE it did. Over this past weekend we became a burglary victim. Our printer, fax, VCR and most importantly out $1,600.00 petty cash we had raised and were saving mostly for Christmas presents was stolen. This obviously is really fucking depressing, so what I am asking is if you or anyone you know can donate us some money or get us a VCR we would love you more than we already do. Help us please, look I know I sound desparate but it is only because at this point I am. —Mary/SF Needle Exchange."
Mary Howe / SFNE Coordinator / 409 Clayton St. / San Francisco, CA 94117

Thanks for reading,
—Rachel

MRR—
As a British Punk of some 30+ summers I have watched with interest the changes in the punk scene over the Years from my first awakening via Sham 69 back in 1978 to my current love of all things street punk, no real change there then musically but I digress.

Over the years i have been involved in a lot of things from the poll tax riots to hunt sabbing and Anti-Fascist Action. My involvement with punk did not lessen during my university years or my subsequent dead end shit jobs, I believed in punk as a force for good and above all a force for change. The past few months, however, have led me to question the direction that punk seems to be taking. I am talking about the re-election of Bush the Goon to the Shitehouse.

For months running up to the election we were treated, as *MRR* readers, to column after column of soul searching introspection from punks agonising over the "to vote or not to vote" dilemma. I know that due to the peculiar voting system in the states the outcome of any election hinges on marginalised, uninformed floating voters in one or two key states but the whole idea of not voting astonishes me.

I have always voted whenever the opportunity has arisen and I have always voted against the incumbent whether right wing or, in reality, the slightly less right wing my argument being this.

When a Government changes the system is to all intents and purposes stalled, six months of an administration are taken up filling cabinet positions and changing the government infrastructure. Another six months are taken up with the government working out the agenda for government and mastering their briefs (understanding what they are expected to do and what their powers are). Maybe one year into an administration the government is back in a position to start really fucking things up by starting wars and attacking individual liberty. By the time they really get going they have to start preparing for and fighting for re-election and once again have to take their foot of the pedal. The longer they are distracted the less time they have to fuck people over.

Bush is backed by the fundamentalist Christian lobby and is engaged in a war for oil where his main enemies are fundamentalist Muslim extremists. Both sets of fundamentalists scare the shit out of most of the rest of the world. At the end of the day, they all want to drag us back into the middle ages, a time when us peasants knew our place and paid our tithes like good little workers and went happily to die in whatever war their masters felt the need to fight at the time. This was a time when no one except landowners could vote and a time that I feel our world leaders would like to return to. Given the sacrifices made by workers of both sexes to achieve the vote in the first place not voting seems to me to be playing straight into the hands of the ruling elite.

Let me emphasise that voting once in a while does not mean that you agree with the policies of those you vote for but rather to disrupt the continuity of oppression. On a separate issue Felix Havoc's last column takes issue with Live Aid. The concert at Wembley Stadium in London was put on by Bob Geldof (Of the Boomtown Rats) as a direct result of his watching a documentary about the famine in Ethiopia. The song in this country was "Do they know it's Christmas." All the money raised went to aid agencies fighting famine in Africa. Incidentally the music was shit and I spent the night of Live Aid watching the Guanabatz. The cause was valid and raised the profile of starvation and made a few yuppies part with a bit of cash for a change and develop a short-term social conscious.

In America Live Aid was put on and the song was "We are the world," the recording of which involved expenses being paid for the "stars," something that did not happen in the UK. Some "stars" (Stand up Bob Dylan you fucking shit) lobbied for 30% of the moneys raised to be used in helping the poor in America further diluting the actual aid available to the worlds poorest and most vulnerable people. The books of Live Aid in the US were never open for public scrutiny, unlike the UK's, and fuck knows where the money actually went.

America is selfish and self-satisfied and at the end of the day I suppose you get the government that you deserve but as punks you must use every tool at your disposal to try and bring about change, if that means voting then what the fuck.

By All Means Necessary
—Dave
Lisafer98@aol.com

MRR—

If anyone reading this is a fan of the Rabid Dogs and/or a friend of Nils Larson, you should probably know that this past saturday night he hit not one, not two, but *three* girls after some words were thrown back and forth.

The argument started as something that wasn't physical, and Nils said he "didn't want any trouble," but then proceeded to spit a mouthful of burrito at my face and then went on to punch me in the head two times, knocking me to the ground the second. My friend Tomika tried to get him off of me, and in the swing of things got hit in the head a couple times too. He also knocked her to the floor. Ali was down the street on the phone, and when she realized what was going on (her two friends were lying on the ground below Nils) she proceeded to throw him up against a wall and hit him multiple times. He also hit Ali in the face (but she said it was totally whack).

I now have a bruised knee and ass, a swollen right side of my nose, and a bruise on my ass that makes it hard to sit without being uncomfortable. Tomika also has a sore spot on her head, but Ali is fine.

Now, let me tell you guys a little bit of history....

Nils Larson has been spreading *rumors* for the past 4 or so years that Ali and I are *nazis* (which we definitely are *not*) because a black man hit Ali in the face while Nils was standing right there. Instead of being a *man* about sticking up for her, he walked away, allowing the fight to continue. Not only is Nils a pussy piece of shit, but he can now be deemed as someone who *hits girls*. I'd hope that anyone who has common sense will know *not* to book his band the Rabid Dogs, nor should they have any sort of contact with Nils. He is obviously a piece of shit and he pushed it way too far this time. I'm not a cop caller, so I'm not about to call the police...but I'm about 300% sure this dumbass will get what's coming to him.

Pass this bulletin on, warn people about this douchebag. After all, if he hit three girls in *one* night, you never know what other kind of fucked up shit he might pull.
—Courtney, Seattle, WA

MRR—

Let me first start off with I've been meaning to write you for years and haven't. This will result in a crappy overloaded letter, the least I can say is sorry.

What finally prompted me to write was the November 04 issue. Major props for the Harrisburg/York/Lancaster scene report. Despite the slew of annoying emo bands, PA still has *some* DIY punk and hardcore. I recently attended a few of the York basement shows. Some killer hardcore, thrash, and grind bands totally tore it up, as did the kids in a small space (I've seen bigger closets!). Unfortunately, most of these bands were touring bands from New York, not PA. I myself am from a small town in south central PA, local shows are/were a 30 minute drive or more. Most of these shows weren't even in PA, they were in Maryland or West Virginia. You see, my area has a large concentration of people listening to grunge and other tired 90s musical trends. This sort of stuff bled into local shows, as did this area's other obnoxious love—"death metal." Basically, you traveled out of your way to see "local" shows that you didn,t even care for.

Of course there were some good shows, Strong Intention resides not far from here and they played/booked some great shows. The 180 club in Hagerstown, MD had great shows (that I sadly never attended). Oddly enough, I find myself still full of "717" spirit.

As long as even *one* person (I like to think there are more) in a ten mile radius still shares a DIY punk/hardcore ethic, wants to play basement shows, and basically have fun via tearing shit up, I'm 100% into it. And let me tell you city slicker NYC types; you haven't lived punk until you've experienced backwoods hardcore ala Pennsylvania 717 style. Building forts in the woods, tying trains of sleds to back of four wheelers and going through the mud, rafting down filthy creeks, drinking cooking wine, and then wrapping it all up by playing some ultra-shitty noise core with lyrics containing the word "fuck" every two words at a local churches teen center for some elderly ladies who think it sounds "lovely." This is life. Last of all, I've gotta say thanks MRR for some great bathroom read. George Tabb usually has me cracking up at mid-dump and I always drop a deuce for Mykel Board. Keep it up!

—Dave Destroyer
Destroyer Crew (you know, the band that thought they were cool cause they had an ad in the back of *MRR*?)
destroyercrew@tumyeto.com

MRR—

As of late I have been reading a lot of punk rock writing about the state of the US punk/hardcore scene compared to the other punk scenes in other countries, or compared to the punk rock days of the past. First, I want to start by saying the *924 Gilman* book that *MRR* put out was a breath of fresh air for me. On the cover of the book it reads "the story so far," right there it shows the book is related to today and is moving forward into the future, not stuck in the past. So, great job to all who worked on that book. It's very inspiring. I hope in a number of years we will have another one to read. It's a lot easier to take then countless books like *American Hardcore*, which state that hardcore died in 1986. We have all these people in punk today that dropped out but still have to just keep that one foot in the door, even though they have no interest in what is happening now. And even if they did, they would fight the urge because it's a lot easier to sit back and tell old stories than create new ones. The Gilman book is great, but I do wish somebody who was around since the start that's still around today would write a book. Somebody who still supports punk rock today and follows the bands and plays a role in the everyday punk rock world. A book that compared yesterday and today, and gave us some new ideas with things we could learn from. So come on all you old dudes I know you are out there step up to the plate, write a book, and put these old jaded bastards in there place. Like I said, the Gilman book is great, but a book that covers it all from '75 to '04—lets see it happen.

Moving to my second topic, punk in the US compared to punk in other countries. First, yes it's very different that should go without saying. People in the US have it all, this is true. We are very spoiled for the most part. Being a punk rocker in the US is pretty easy, right? You have your Hot Topic, your MTV, your teeny-bopper mags with Rancid on the cover. You can start a label, put out your own records, make a zine. We also have the internet all over the fucking place, so you can get all your punk gear anytime of the night with Mommy's or Daddy's credit card. Easy, right? And also, you don't even have to get beaten up anymore for having fucked up hair. What the fuck? That has not happened since the 80s right? So punk rock is so mainstream, so acceptable and accessible for all to enjoy.

I almost forgot touring in the US, man that's soooo fucking easy. You just have to buy a van and book it. Since everybody in the US is loaded, the van thing is really easy. And as far as getting shows, just call your local Hot Topic, they'll take care of it for you. Do you really think this is how it is? Has punk rock in the US become this easy and accessible? No, of course not. This, however, is how people like to look at it, and see it fit to write columns or books describing it this way. Note: I am also not taking to the other extreme by saying it's a gut wrenching struggle, 24 hours a day.

I have just read a column in *MRR* by Mike Thorn about nothing in the US punk scene is a struggle and in other countries they are not spoiled. What I got from his column was nothing but discredit for everything every punk in the US does on a day-to-day basis. I also read a song by the band STOCKHOLM SYNDROME, who had a song about a similar topic but much more positive. Although, I have to say it still came as a shot to the US punk rocker, which I suppose it was meant for. The outer shell of the US punk rock world can look very plastic, but that outer shell is something a lot of us punk rockers never see. We are too busy putting on shows in the backyards/basements/squats/rented halls and wherever we can to do an all ages show. We also play in bands, DIY political and non-political bands alike. These bands are not radio friendly and their shirts will not be sold at Hot Topic. You have to keep your ear to the ground for this shit.

You may also think because punk rock looks cool on the cover of Vogue magazine, it's look must be well-received all over the country. This could not be further from the truth. Try telling North and South Dakota or West Texas that punk rock is now the hip thing. Or the redneck town of Olean, NY, where I grew up. If you look like a punk rocker in the high schools of America, you better not whisper the word bom because that will be your demise. In my old school, combat boots, chain wallets, trench coats, spiked hair and a ton of shirts that are deemed offensive are banned. Does this seem easy for a punk rocker? To me, it looks like rebellion is still tied into punk rock. Maybe in places like the Bay Area, surrounded by it, and where ever you go, it's there in some form. Punk and hardcore will reach 30 years soon; some historians say it already has. Did you really think all those bands that have come out in the past 30 years would never sell it to the man? They left for mainstream music, we stayed for the punk rock. Because you can tell the alternative rock that's called punk from the aggressive punk playing in some kid's basement.

I was watching some video and it had Keith Morris in it. He was talking about how in the 80s, he was playing this show. At this show, water was coming in through the walls because it was a basement and I guess in the 80s basements leaked (weird). Anyway, he said the Circle Jerks could have been electrocuted from the water around the equipment, but they still played in a basement with a puddle right in front of them (crazy). What a guy and what a punk, thanks for paving the way, Keith. If that happened to me, I would go with Clear Channel also for tour booking, you fucking loser. This is going to be hard to believe, but in the year 2004 basements still leak. Yes, they are still built underground and still when houses get old, the walls will come apart, thus letting water in when it rains. Yes, Keith, we as punk rockers still risk our lives in these death traps everyday. To all the jaded bastards who have not really looked into this shit beyond MTV: please get your foot out of the door—we are trying to close it!

I am also not saying we have it harder then some of the third-world punks out there, but we do have it different and we make the most out of what we do have. I am sick of the place I live being talked about by people who think that they know how it all works. None of us know how it all works. Punks all over the country are fighting to keep all-ages hardcore punk alive in their towns. They are also still fighting with their moms and dads to let them go see a band in some house that's owned by a kid named trashcan. Punks still get weird looks for the way they dress and act. *We are still a rebellion* and we still search for change. Next time you feel down on the US punk scene look a little deeper and you find some cool shit happening in this country—I can promise you that. I just got back from a 50-day tour and I saw some rad shit. I can tell everybody is not rich and every town is not the same—they all have their struggles.

Please feel free to write about any comments.

—Ryan Cappelletti
209 Center St,
Olean, NY 14760,
punksbeforeprofits@hotmail.com

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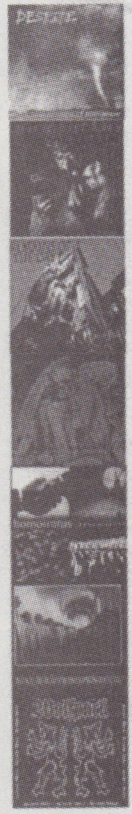

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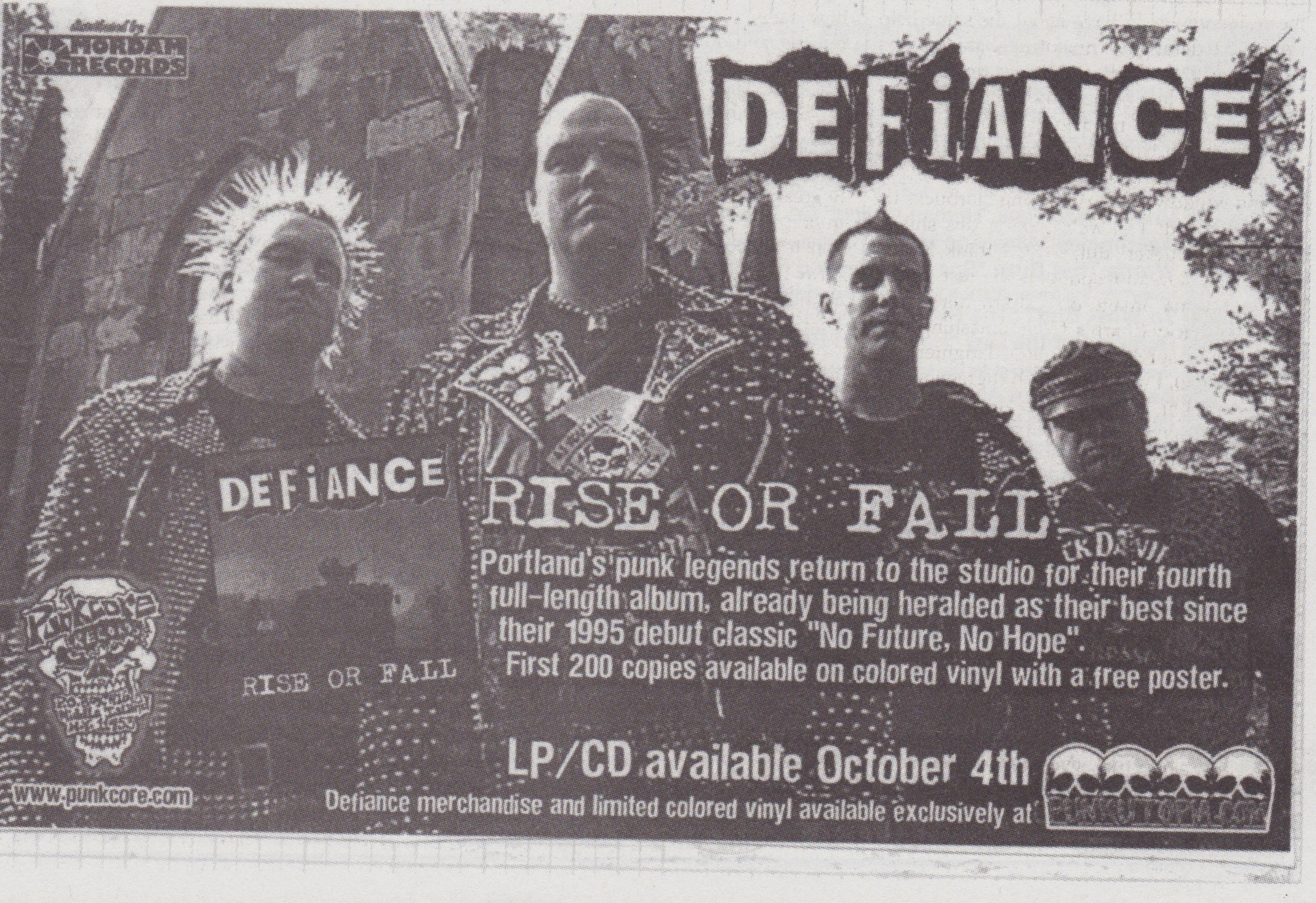
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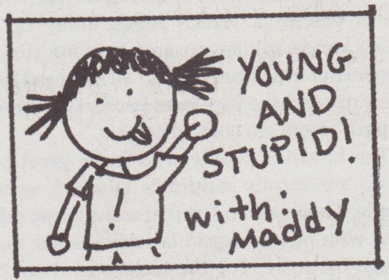


Greetings downtrodden and beleaguered readers! I write this one week after Dubya won the presidential election, leading me to spend several hours sitting around the house with my roommates staring at the TV and coming up with different articulate expressions of our grief and disbelief, like, "Fuck!" and "Fuck!" (the second time followed by a long, long sigh). At the transitional housing center for women with addiction and mental health issues where I work, the despair took the form of excessive consumption of Twizzlers from the local food bank to drown out the sinking realization that a second Bush term would likely mean many of the residents would have about the same help from the federal government as sharecroppers did in the 1920s. Political outburst time: Fuck!

I could go into some long rant here, about how, dude, we all need to take to the streets armed with, uh, backpacks covered in Filth and Crass patches and like totally smash every fucking window of every fucking Starbucks in, like, the world! Yes, we're taking this shit to Bangladesh, fucker! But, since I think I'm as clueless for how to respond as the rest of you (and the visual image of a short, dorky girl wearing a Lucky Charms T-shirt smashing anything would surely bring about laughter, not social change), I will avoid such digressions!

Instead, I'm going to turn to yet another subject that, compared to most *MRR* columnists, I know little to nothing about (Prepare the cannons filled with spikes and rare Assuck seven-inches and aim them towards the Midwest!): punk rock! Yes, I am once again going to write a column about music on the grounds that nothing ridiculous has happened to me lately, and if I told you any more anecdotes about my woes in the past year, you'd start mistaking me for a Jade Tree band! Oh, the horror!

Luckily, punk rock continues to exist, regardless of political turmoil or personal disasters! I imagine that, even if half the world were destroyed by, I don't know, the sudden and violent climate change depicted in the *Day After Tomorrow* (If you haven't seen this movie in a packed theater on opening night while watching the people around you crying when Jake Gyllenhall survives, then I assure you, you have not truly lived!), there would be some punk band writing a song about it. We are just not going away!

What follows is not a traditional Top Ten Records of the Year list. It is not some final calculation of the merits and demerits of every last inch of vinyl recorded from here to Calcutta! Most of these records didn't even come out this year! And there are only eight records on my list! Oh, the shame and statistical inaccuracy of it all!

You see, for about six months of this year, I had about 25 cents on any given day, making the purchasing of any new record, even the moderately priced Plan-it-X offerings, impossible. And then, once I did have money, I went and spent it all on old folk records and books of Russian poetry! The horror! Plus, despite growing up in Wisconsin, a state well-known for its expert punk rankers (Rev. Norb, et al), I somehow failed to learn how to accurately rank records, and only made an all-time top ten list at the behest of my boyfriend at the time (a list so inherently flawed that I believe it ranked HUSKER DU lower than the MR. T EXPERIENCE! I cannot be trusted!)

So, this is just a list, no pressure, just ten really great records I've been listening to this year. In no particular order, of course! Also, I'm sure that ten seconds after I send this over to the *MRR* compound, I'll remember that I forgot about the best record of the year, or something. That's just how dumb I am!

1. END OF THE WORLD NEWS—*1917* EP: This is quite possibly my favorite seven-inch of all time. I have long been an advocate of the *specific* song. You know, a song about dishwashing, or a local character who hangs out at the coffee shop, or a song about, I dunno, Volodorsky, Chudnorsky, and Bukharin! Yes, the END OF THE WORLD NEWS write songs about Russian revolutionaries living in New York City in the years leading up to the revolution. But it's not just that this is some poppy punk record that mentions Russia, although as a Russian history freak, I'd settle for that. The lyrics manage to capture all the longing of exiles, and pre-revolutionary hope and optimism, and the disgust with American capitalism. Volodarsky, whose speeches caused one friend to comment, "Listening to him one realized, more than with any other orator, how an agitator…could knead the dough of humankind until it took shape under his bands and was transformed into the essential weapon of revolution," was killed after the revolution. Bukharin, whose statement given before his execution in the 1930s is one of the most depressing documents I've encountered (for its Stalinist-imposed self-hatred) ends with, "What matters is not the personal feelings of a repentant enemy, but the flourishing progress of the U.S.S.R. and its international importance," led a similarly dismal post-1917 existence. (I confess ignorance as to the activities of Comrade Chudnorsky!) My favorite song on this record is written from the perspective of these three before the revolution destroyed all their dreams: "Chud and Buk and Vol/Sounding like the fall/Of a garbage can in the mud/Chud and Vol and Buk/Sounding like the talk/Of a man whose mouth's full of gum." But! "Come the day when our exile's ended/ Our names will be splendid as before/ Voladarsky/ Chudnorsky/ Bukharin/ As before!"

2. ALLERGIC TO BULLSHIT—*If This is What We're For, This is What We'll Get* and *Train I Ride* EPs: These records are amazing based on vocals alone. Ivy is one of the best punk rock singers ever! And few lyrics better express the current political mood than "It breaks my fucking heart and sometimes I want to die/ but I refuse to let this choking feeling take my life/ Do you wanna see a war that never ends?/ I've seen too much freedom to give it up again."

3. RIVETHEAD—*The Cheap Wine of Youth* LP: Somehow, the magical spirit that is SCREECHING WEASEL has been channeled and combined with totally endearing lyrics about train tracks, avoiding the rat race, and blowing up banks! And they're from Minneapolis! Plus, these songs are so catchy, you'd have to be an atonal experimental music freak not to like 'em! When I say that punk rock is folk music, I don't mean punk rock is violins and banjos (although it *can* be that!). I mean that great punk rock is simple, and you can sing along to it. That its just three chords, and those same three chords have been used a million times before is really the best part of punk music, or folk music, or any five-year-old playing around with their Fisher Price battery-powered guitar. Plus, this album contains one of the best lyrics for a short song I've encountered in some time: "I'm a fuck up who fucks up/Gets too drunk can't shut up/ I'm hopeless I know this/ I shoplift I'm homeless/ I love you, It's

stupid/ Sounds sappy its true but/ It could pass might be that/Speed makes me think fast." I love this band!

4. AGAINST ME!—*As the Eternal Cowboy* LP: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I know! Everyone loves this! What an unoriginal selection! But I doth protest! When something's great, it's great! And this record is amazing! Case closed!

5. DAG NASTY—*Can I Say* CD: This is just embarrassing. Yes, I had never listened to this album until this year. I blame the Wisconsin punk scene, where, in exchange for a total immersion into the wonders of the Rip Off Records back catalog, you end up—at the age of 25—having to sneak into your local punk record store and buy records most kids had memorized by the age of 12. Oh, the shame! But think about it this way—this year, I got to hear DAG NASTY for the first time! And just think of how many more records I'll still get to hear for the first time. Ah, the advantages of growing up surrounded by beer and cows!

6. MODERN MACHINES—*Thwap!* LP: The MODERN MACHINES are that band that never quite has it together. They go on tour and forget to book half the shows. They get too drunk to play. They almost die when their van's tie rod falls off while they (um, and me) are driving through Kentucky. But none of that matters because this band is genius, and if they weren't such crazy fuck-ups, they'd be the biggest thing since, I dunno, CRIMPSHRINE. When this band is good, they'll have you dancing around like crazy, in a state of euphoria that only a truly amazing basement show can provide. (You know—the feeling that nothing could be better than This Moment right now, and that rock and roll could truly save your soul, and that, even if the world fell apart around you, you wouldn't care). This record can't do justice to the true glory of this band (a combination of the poppier-era of HUSKER DU and something else indescribable), but it's the closest thing to tide me over until their next show. Oh yeah, they're from Milwaukee, which, in case you haven't been paying attention, is the current capital of punk rock, not to mention the best city in the world, and my hometown.

7. PHIL OCHS—*Farewells and Fantasies* CD Box Set: One of the best songwriters all of all time. PHIL OCHS was a contemporary of much more famous musicians like Bob Dylan, and wrote political songs about the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the labor movement, along with personal songs about love, revolution, and everyone's favorite these days: despair. (He killed himself in 1976 after struggling with mental illness for many years.) He wrote so many of my favorite lyrics, like, "Show me the alley, show me the train/ Show me a hobo who sleeps out in the rain/ And I'll show you a young man with so many reasons why/ There but for fortune, may go you or I." Or, in a song about Emmett Till (a 14-year-old boy killed after making a pass at a white women in Mississippi in 1955) and Medgar Evers (a civil rights activist shot in the back in 1963), he ends, simply, "The country gained a killer and the country lost a man."

8. EXPLODING HEARTS—*Guitar Romantic* CD: When this album first came out, I was in grad school, totally immersed in such non-punk endeavors as studying the history of the French labor movement, and by the time I started to get into the Exploding Hearts, 75 percent of the band was dead. I think if I dwell on one more negative event in this column, though, I'm going to bring some readers to the brink of suicide (or at least inadvertently inspire the creation a few emo bands). So, I'll just say that this record is a total BUZZCOCKS-inspired rock and roll masterpiece, and that, if any one of us wrote even one of the songs on this thing, we could stop right there, and spend the rest of our lives sitting on the couch watching reruns of Punky Brewster! In fact, although I've been spending most of my time this year listening to depressing music about Russian Communists and slain civil rights leaders, I hope that this year some bands manage to come up with some more simple, rockin' songs like the ones on this album, to save us all from becoming depressed, morose zombies!

So, there you have it! Eight great records from the past, uh, forty years! Not much else to say, except—See you at the inauguration protests in January! I'll be the short girl with the sign saying "I Hate America" throwing poor quality generic cereal at Dubya! Punk rock!
—Maddy, PO Box 100882, Milwaukee, WI 53210

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIÈCLE ANGST

I'm not really going to talk about the election. I'm sure everyone is sick of hearing about it by now. Clearly, if more of you had bought the *Rock Against Bush Vol. 2* CD and the "Not My President" t- shirt with the Fat Records logo on the back, the vote would have been rocked a little harder and we would not be in the mess we are in now. A new dark age dawns, bringing war, terror, oppression, religious fundamentalism, and erosion of civil liberties. On the bright side, submissions are now being taken for the *Rock Against Bush Vol. 3* CD. I've been forced to cancel my "*Rock Against Kerry*" CD series and stop printing the "Don't blame me, I voted for Nader" t-shirts with the Havoc Logo on the back. So much for my goldmine. Now back to shit.

I spent four out of seven months on tour this year. I bought a new van that will hopefully serve the scene for many years. I met up with old friends, made new friends, scored records, carried amps, ate gas station food, engaged in chairshot politics, and brought hardcore to the people in my own way. I spent a lot of time behind the wheel thinking about the "state of the scene" and the changes in the DIY hardcore scene in the last few years. I got a pretty good feel for what is going on in DIY hardcore in America.

One thing that I've been thinking about lately is which bands get popular and which bands toil in obscurity. Which bands break up and which bands soldier on and on. One frequent complaint I hear from fans is "all the good bands break up, and the mediocre bands keep coming around." Here are some thoughts.

The kinds of people who make great punk music are mostly naturally talented, creative people. That's not to say that some angst ridden teens with no skills can't lay down some raging garage hardcore. For the most part though, to write consistently good songs and play them well, record good records with nice layouts and good sound requires a certain creative spirit and attention to detail that only a few posses. This is why in every genre there are a handful of innovators and a legion of followers. Some have vision and spark and know how to put it into action in their music and art. Others see this and are impressed, but lacking any vision of their own they merely imitate the masters. One of the things that made 1976-77 punk and 1981-82 hardcore so mind blowing was that it drew into it's orbit so many creative people who had been previously marginalized. These outsiders formed bands and created an aesthetic under the rubric of "hardcore" that was not nearly so monolithic as what we have today. BUTTHOLE SURFERS didn't sound like DEAD KENNEDYS, who didn't sound like BAD BRAINS or the BIG BOYS.

DIY hardcore does not pay. Bands are expected to play for 1980 gig prices, sell their records at pennies above cost, and basically conduct business on the slimmest of margins. While this uncommercial approach can be sure to determine which bands are into the music for their artistic integrity and which are just trying to cash in, it is also a huge disincentive to pursue a musical project beyond a few records and one or two tours. The same kind of talented, creative people who create great punk music, probably also have skills that can be parlayed into some far more lucrative line of work, one perhaps with fewer headaches and more recognition for their creativity. Thus, many of the most gifted punks leave the scene for other pursuits. Still others decide to make music a career, but realize that DIY hardcore will never pay their rent, so they start to play a more commercial form of music. At the upper tier of most major indie labels and the bottom rungs of most major labels are a number of acts with roots in DIY hardcore and underground music whose members made this Faustian bargain. They play music that most of us think is quite lame, but objectively they are quite talented musicians and songwriters.

On the other hand there are legions of bands and aspiring musicians who are basically jobbers and hacks. They copy a more popular bands sound and take it on the road. These are the bands that are on tour for six months a year and fill the lower rungs of the rosters of every indie label. They are hard working and technically capable. They answer ads in free weekly papers that include sentences like "must have pro gear and attitude." These bands milk whatever trend is rising and often go on to middling degrees of success through incessant touring of secondary and tertiary music markets and opening slots on package tours.

If you go to any record store with a good selection of used punk records you can easily see how the market has sorted these acts. In every genre there are a handful of standouts, their original releases are sought after collector items and their music is re-issued, compiled, and covered. Yet a few steps down in the discount bin you find all of the has-beens, and never was' who tried to jump on each passing phase. The acceleration of culture in America means that trends rise and fall fast. Music that does not stand the test of time is punished mercilessly. You can find mountains of 25-cent records from the 90s as proof.

One thing I've found in booking tours is the large gap between what bands are expected to be willing to do and what the scene is willing to provide. It's one thing for a band of 18-year old kids with nothing to lose to throw their amps in a borrowed van and hit the road playing basement house parties for gas money. It's another thing altogether to get a band of musicians pushing 30 to fly from Europe or Japan and leave their jobs, families, and other pursuits to play basement house parties for gas money. Every tour I book, I push the band to give me the most time to work with , six to eight weeks if possible. But most only want to do three weeks, maybe four at most. Each of the last few tours I've booked I could have added another month of shows too easily. My mailbox is filled all the time with letters from people wondering why I'm not booking band X in Canada, Kentucky, or Tiera Del Fuego. Realistically, when a band gives you just a limited amount of time you have to try to hit the most essential places in that period of time. Although I would love to add on another week here and another week there, it's just not possible. And if people insist that shows should not be more than $5 and bands not get paid more than gas money, where is the incentive for the bands to take months out of their lives to travel to places to play for less money than it cost to get there? For fun, of course, for the sake of music, of course, but if you do that for ten years or more, you get pretty tapped out for giving over huge chunks of your life to eat gas station food and sleep on floors to play for ten people and get paid less than it will cost you to get fifty miles down the road.

I'm not offering a justification for bands to sell out. I am saying that without structural changes to DIY hardcore, it shouldn't be a surprise when bands break up, or leave the scene for larger labels. For a band to quit their jobs and buy gear and a van and concentrate on making quality records and play all the places that people want to see them, takes time and money.

LET'S GET HURT

MITCH CARDWELL

I know, I know. "Cardwell's slacking off. The guy used to be as regular as my protein-enriched bowel movements, but now he's spotty...like my shits!" I've already wrestled with the complaints, but I've got a good reason for leaving you in semi-darkness for the last financial quarter. I've been "slacking" because I've had a hard time finding new releases worth discussing. You might be asking yourself how a guy who (supposedly) likes *everything* could have this opinion. Calling me a crazy asshole would be an honest assumption most of the time, but I'm not the only one with this opinion/problem. You can almost see the tumbleweeds rolling through *MRR*-HQ. Filling out my Top Five list the past couple issues has been a fucking nightmare. When I can't find *five fucking records* worthy of a thumbs-up, there's trouble in Punkville. Never mind the fact that the records I've been digging the most lately can't/won't be covered in these pages! FUCK! In spite of all of this, my "rain or shine" devotion to my sexy audience remains firmly in tact. I've braved the wasteland for a couple of months and emerged with a few roses. Hopefully they don't smell like shit.

Contrary to popular belief, you won't find my name on the payroll and financial records of LOST SOUNDS. I could see why you might think that, as I spend more time on them and their related projects than I do on anything else. What can I say? You can't fuck with devotion. Being a LOST SOUNDS fan is an incredibly rewarding thing. Not only do you get to hear some of the finest rock'n'roll being made today...you get to hear *tons* of it. In my last column, I clued you in to *six* full-length releases with Jay Reatard and Alicja Trout connections. This month, there are four more records. That's ten records in three months. Holy...fucking...shit.

Naturally, there is no better place to start than the new self-titled LP from LOST SOUNDS, released on In The Red Records. While I tend to drool over just about anything this band does, there is a special amount of importance that should be placed on a new album from them. I'll eat up the EPs and demo collections faster than most, but when they release an album, it's time to focus. You might recall my ass-licking review of *Future Touch*, the 12"EP that immediately preceded this new album. In that review, I made a big deal of the clean sound and (perhaps) new focus the band seemed to have. With this record, they run top-speed in this new, clean direction. Given the immediately apparent emphasis on hooks that the LP has, one might assume that the band has gone "soft." The clean sound of this record is so drastic that I've already read reports saying that LOST SOUNDS have gone pop. While I find that assumption to be total and complete horseshit (seen 'em live recently???), I will say that the production, bounce factor, and infectious tendencies make this LOST SOUNDS record far different from its predecessors. I mean, it doesn't sound like EPOXIES or anything, but the differences are very apparent. Long-time followers will be glad to hear that the tortured vibes ("I Get Nervous") and man vs. machine ("Clones Don't Love") mood are more prevalent here than they have been in any of their previous releases, which is all the proof you'll ever need that this band continues to grow and take chances. LOST SOUNDS is simply amazing...and they just topped themselves!

I find it both strange and flattering when people contact me asking for ordering information for certain releases and stuff. Judging from the amount of requests I got for info and copies of THE REATARDS' *Bed Room Disasters* CD-R I mentioned in the last column, there's still a ton of interest in Jay's tortured teenage years. Rightly so, as THE REATARDS produced some of the wildest, meanest, scariest punk in recent memory. For those of you not so keen on the whole CD-R release revolution we are currently swamped in, Empty Records was kind enough to rescue *Bed Room Disasters* and release it properly on vinyl and legit CD! This release compiles a few of the impossible-to-find singles along with a whole fucking slew of previously unreleased demos and covers. For a band that left us way too soon, it's good to know that Jay's vaults can produce fruit this sweet/rotten. Eat it up quickly (and try to score the limited red vinyl version!) because another helping of REATARDS rarities (possibly a 2xLP!?!?) is on its way!

Not to be outdone, Alicja Trout checks in with two new releases this month. The first is the *Pop* (a.k.a. - *Alicja's Home Recordings*) CD-R, a solo release on Contaminated Records. This CD compiles material that didn't seem to fit in with any of her other projects. This initially struck me as a bit odd, considering that she seems to have plenty of fully functional outlets for the hard stuff (FITTS, LOST SOUNDS) as well as the softer stuff (MOUSEROCKET, NERVOUS PATTERNS). This CD, however, actually does stand on its own, and is well worth investigating. Next up is the debut 7"EP by *another* new Alicja band, THE RIVER CITY TANLINES. The *Black Night* 7"EP, released on Misprint Records, is fantastic, straight-forward rock with a 60s punk vibe running throughout. Great stuff!

Moving out of Memphis (but still staying very much in the "ass-licking" department!), I recently saw THE TIME FLYS play a party at my friend's house. As is often the case, I'm the last to hear about great local stuff and my out-of-the-loop stumbling upon THE TIME FLYS is no exception. This band features Andy from THE CUTS, but there's barely a trace of that swirly *2 Over Ten* sound here. THE TIME FLYS play fantastic punk inspired by the formative stages of the genre. Take a pinch of glam, a hearty helping of "Cock In My Pocket"/demos-era STOOGES and the "anything-goes" drunken goodness of Midwest cavemen like THE GIZMOS (who the band covers live!) or MIKE REP AND THE QUOTAS. Think proto-punk without the brains. Brilliant! Birdman Records has taken notice and released two debut singles for the band (because one just wouldn't do!), "Energy/P.C. Action" and "The Wet Ones/Christine (Humble Warrior)." These two discs haven't left my turntable since I got them. In a year that has seen literally twenty *great* punk singles worthy of being singled out (har-har), these two would have to be my top picks thus far. These beauties are definitely my picks of the issue, which is a huge compliment considering everything mentioned above. Fantastic!

It would appear that Sacramento, CA is bouncing back from the horrible blow they took with the departure of FM KNIVES. The first and most notable Sac savior would have to be TH' LOSIN STREAKS. Formed out of the ashes of THE SHRUGGS and THE TROUBLEMAKERS, TH' LOSIN STREAKS play some incredibly upbeat garage punk that borrows equally from the classic Pacific Northwest sound and high-energy 60s mod punk. Slovenly Records has just released the band's debut LP, *Sounds Of Violence*, and it's one that I'm sure will appear on many year-end "Best-Of" lists.

Sacramento's least favorite son and SHORT EYES' bass player, Martin Heroin, has finally managed to see some vinyl released for his long running "Killed By Blues" band, THE SORES. Borox Records has released a 12"EP entitled *6 Songs Of Despair And Frustration*, a record that definitely lives up to its title. The *Wormwood* 7"EP, released on the freshly excavated Kryptonite Records, closely follows the bigger platter in terms of uneasiness and swamp-slop. Keep this band away from fireworks.

Speaking of Kryptonite, long-time CEO and famed Wisconsin Wildman Roy Oden briefly set up shop in Sacramento. In addition to resurrecting his label for The Sores, he managed to release a single by his latest project, HUMAN ZOO. With HUMAN ZOO, Roy moves away from the blues-stomp last heard with THE EVOLUTIONS and dives in head first to electronic buzz and tortured punk. If you are at all familiar with Roy's previous projects or the Kryptonite catalog, you know that these lo-fi records sound closer to a dentist appointment than a punk record. *Human Zoo Pts. I and II* is a record for the truly fucked up and stupidly brave.

The latest S-S Records releases should serve as a worthy cap-off to this Sacramento rundown. I'm consistently challenged and inspired by this label's output. Although I'm positive you won't see the record reviewed in these pages, I would be cheating you if I neglected to mention the exceptional punkish free jazz spewed out by ANTENNAS ERUPT. S-S just released this band's debut LP, *Magical Energy*, and it really knocked me out. I would suggest that adventurous and open-minded listeners investigate this S-S LP and the other Erupt-related releases on Weird Forest.

While I'm sure the S-S brain trust wants you to pay attention to their latest full length release, there's simply no denying that the new single they released will be that drives punkers batty. That's right: S-S has released a new 7" by A-FRAMES! "Complications/Frankenstein" is a single that collects two standout tracks from the band's early demos. For those keeping score, these tunes are from the same batch as last year's much sought after Royal Records EP. This will be the last you hear from A-FRAMES until mid-2005, when their 3rd album, *Black Forest*, is scheduled for release. Of course, I might not be able to talk about that record here...

THE BASEBALL FURIES recently blew through the area on tour. I managed to catch them twice and was knocked out by both performances. Much to my surprise, they had a new album with them, a record I didn't even see on the radar. *Let It Be*, released on Big Neck Records, is The Furies' finest outing to date. While the production doesn't have the boom that *Greater Than Ever* had, the tunes are darker, slightly poppier and more driving. This is how I always wanted this band to sound. The Baseball Furies are also featured on *Pain In The Big Neck*, a new compilation from (duh) Big Neck. As expected, this features exclusive tunes by some of the best bands going today: CATHOLIC BOYS, FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS (R.I.P.), LOST SOUNDS, RADIO BEATS and MHZ to name a few.

Jeth-Row Records is one of a handful of labels that are putting New Orleans on the map in 2004. By now, I'm sure you've heard of MANGINA and their hilarious *At War With Black Metal* 7"EP. While the record is a drunken novelty at best, it's still a pretty fun record to spin. I also feel a bit strange that their CELTIC FROST cover somehow adds legitimacy to my record collection. Those who might wanna play it straight/serious, check out Jeth-Row's latest 7"EP, the debut from the highly-touted SCRIP+S.

Over the past couple of years, I've had the great pleasure of corresponding with THE CARBONAS. They've released an LP and a 7"EP during this time, and both releases impressed quite a few of us punk vinyl hounds. As great as those two discs are, their more recent material is not only their best, but it's some of the finest American punk rock around today! For a taste of this, be sure to hunt down *Frothing At The Mouth*, their new 7"EP released on their own imprint, Douche Master Records. The three tunes here have been gathered from three separate recording sessions and show just how great this band really is. Act *very* quickly if you want a copy of this EP, as there were only 200 copies pressed. Having been one of the lucky few to have heard much of their recorded (and still, unfortunately and somewhat amazingly, unreleased) material, this single is just the tip of the iceberg. Rumors of an upcoming LP on Rip Off continue to circulate. Guess we'll just have to wait and see.

Speaking of Rip Off Records, Mrs. Lowery has just released the much-anticipated debut LP from THE LIDS. Another Atlanta band (and sharing a CARBONAS member!), THE LIDS first turned punkish heads with their debut 7"EP from 2003. This LP picks up right where that one left off, staying true to the LOLI AND THE CHONES influence, but adding a deeper girl-group feel. Hopefully they can work out some sort of tour, because the rest of the country needs to see this band live!

Staying in Atlanta, THE BLACK LIPS have a new live 7" released on Shake Your Ass Records. If you've ever seen this band live, prepare for some of the wildest garage freak-out you're ever gonna hear. I wonder if this record captures the penis-strumming. In other Black Lips news, their Die Slaughterhaus Records is at the forefront of this new Atlanta craze. Hopefully you already knew this! Be sure to pick up their new releases from TYRADES, DIE ROTZZ and FRANTIC (whose *Attaque* 7"EP astounds!!!). As is usually the case, act fast!

THE ROCK'N'ROLL ADVENTURE KIDS have returned! Vida Loca Records has released a new split 7"EP with RNRAK and THE INTELLECTUALS! As much as I like the INTELLECTUALS' tunes (and their previous single on Hate), THE ADVENTURE KIDS completely steal the show here. It's even their first non-live release! Cock-a-doodle-doo!

That SHORT EYES tour I went on really took me outta the record loop. Funny how three solid weeks without access to distro websites and Bay Area record bins can leave a fanatic like me semi-clueless and playing catch-up. Upon my return from the stink fest tour, there was an incredible amount of chatter about this new French band, THE FATALS. I read a number of quotes calling their debut *Angry* 7"EP on Nasty Product the best single of the year. To add fuel to my "need-it" fire, I soon found that the single was loooooooong gone. Luckily, I was able to trade for a copy of it (yes, I traded for a new release) and finally got to hear what all the fuss was about. The *Angry* single features four of the most booming, blown-out punkers you'll hear this year. Imagine the fuzz'n'screech trash production of many Euro garagers mixed with the attitude and delivery of some Rip Off Records greats. Yes, this lives up to all the distorted lo-fi punk applause. While *Angry* is already sold out, there's a double dose of the FATALS this month. P.Trash brings us the *Livin' In My Bed* 7"EP, while Yakisakana drops the *Slave My Soul* 7"EP. Three top fucking notch singles in one year make the FATALS a band to pay very close attention to.

It sure took them long enough to do it,

but CRIMSON SWEET has finally checked in with their follow-up release to their great *Livin' In Strut* album. Shake It Records was kind enough to release the *Blood Transfusion* 7"EP. While none of the three tracks excite me as much as their previous material, I'm constantly amazed by how difficult it is to pinpoint CRIMSON SWEET's sound. They don't do anything all that strange, yet you can't just call them a clone band. Interesting stuff, and a must for fans.

Missile X also recently released the debut single by THE DIRGES, a new band featuring Rose from THE BRIDES and members of BASEBALL FURIES. First heard on *Maybe Chicago?*, the DIRGES have a knack for blending soulful R&B and 'tude-heavy Midwestern punk. "Cold River/Three Time Loser" is easily one of the year's top debut singles. I expect big things in the future from this band.

THE DIRTBOMBS? Bootlegged? It's true! Some bastard (who may or may not be a band member!?) shit out the *Live: North Of 8 Mile* LP for the dirty faithful on MFIC Records. As far as live "bootlegs" go, this is about as good as it gets. You already know how good the tunes are, but thankfully this release catches them on a good night with great sound. I suspect that this'll be relatively hard to come by in a month or 2, so look high and low before resorting to inflated eBay prices.

Goodbye Boozy has broken tradition (and pretty much shattered my existence) by releasing an LP! How could one of the world's finest singles labels forsake my format of choice for a long player? Fans of the label should already recognize NIGHT TERRORS from their previous single. You know the drill: weirdo "weed garage" (you heard it here first!) from members of THE MISTREATERS and SAGGER. *Zurfluh!* is one fucked-up listen, so buyers beware!

As far as old stuff goes, I really don't have much to cover. There are a couple of new bootleg singles floating around out there, the best of which is a spot-on reissue of the *God Is Dead* 7"EP by HEART ATTACK. Solid Sex Lovie Doll (do I have your attention yet?) and Shake Your Ass have teamed up to bring us some unreleased JACK O' FIRE material too. Good luck finding that one! You might also stumble upon some less-than-stellar DAMNED and DRONES reissues too. Ho-hum.

I'm sure Henry Yu already covered the recent slop Rave-Up Records spilled recently (CLASSIC RUINS anyone?), so I'll skip the rundown on those in favor of a truly great new bootleg comp. I stumbled upon *Come Out And Play: American Power Pop I (1975-78)* just before this column's deadline and simply had to get it in here. Although it's probably not that apparent given the majority of stuff I write about, I'm a huge fan of this genre. I'm a card-carrying sucker for all the *Teenline, Backseat Love,* and *Powerpearls* compilations, and I've been known to force people to listen to them. *Come Out And Play* is a little bit different from those comps in that it serves as a *perfect* introduction to the genre, starting with the absolute cream of the crop. The track listing reads like a who's-who of classic American power-pop, compiling flat-out classics like THE NERVES, REAL KIDS and FLAMIN' GROOVIES as well as little-known greats like THE FLASHCUBES and PEZBAND. This compilation is so good that I bought one even though I already owned most of the stuff on it! It's that fucking good! Although the genre rules appear to be quite troublesome for many (REAL KIDS? Power-pop???), this comp offers an incredibly clear glimpse into this misunderstood and oft-ignored music. The compiler seems to clearly place bands in distinct camps based of their key influences (namely BIG STAR and RASPBERRIES), which is a useful tool for someone unfamiliar with this stuff. I really can't think of a better introduction to power-pop than this compilation, so if you're curious, this is absolutely the best place for you to start. Highest recommendation!

That'll do it for this month. Considering how much complaining I did to start this column off, I sure plowed through a whole buncha noteworthy stuff. Maybe I was just being lazy? Honestly, it took me two months to find all this shit to dish and the searches were tougher than ever. Best of luck finding these goodies...<MITCH CARDWELL> <PO BOX 23882, OAKLAND, CA 94623 USA> <letsgethurt@yahoo.com>

No.

Well, there's one of the pitfalls of Democracy for ya: periodically, everyone gets subjected to the worst type of mob rule. As with all things, this too shall pass. In the spirit of bi-partisanship and analysis of this moment in time, however, let's take a moment to look into the mind of a typical member of the 51% of our voting electorate who decided that George W. Bush deserves a second term. Perhaps a simple question will suffice.

Q: Why did you vote for George W. Bush? How would you respond to proven facts and statistics proving that his lies and arrogant policies have made the world far more dangerous since he took office?

A: A man with such unwavering faith in our lord and savior Jesus Christ could *never* lie. The bible says lying is a sin, and only a surly, corrupted, idol-harboring Catholic like John Kerry would be capable of lying like that. Him, and all of those godless heathens of *ugh* "various faiths" at the UN. You know what UN really stands for, don't you? UNDER NATAS! Natas is, of course SATAN spelled backwards. As we all know, them evil Muslims, Hindus, and godless communists in the UN are very clever at confusing us simple Christian folk with this reverse-word gobbledygook.

Plus, you know, I understand the President. Why, when I've had a bad few months at work and I'm gettin' pushed around by my boss cuttin' my salary, not to mention that jerk who spraypainted "ASSHOLE" on my brand new Chevy Behemoth SUV the other day while I was parked at the church, I just feel like goin' on down to the bar and *kickin' some ass* on the nearest darkie I see. Hell, that's just the American Way the way I sees it. Don't matter if he did nothin', I can tell he's a terrorist faggot just by lookin' at him and you just *know* he wants to get married to some other terrorist faggot and undermine our sacred institutions right before he sticks a bomb in 'em to blow 'em up. Why, he'd probably want some Democrat to get elected so they can take away my SUV and my guns, making my whole family much less safe.

My wife would say somethin' to agree with me but she's got a broken jaw right now. The other day I had to show her who was boss when she started to mouth off about how maybe we should let our thirteen-year old daughter LeAnne get an abortion since she was never told in school what a condom is, and how she'll have to drop out of school if she has the baby and all this other horse pucky. My wife is a good wife, though. She knows her place is in the home, and she knows to shut the fuck up when I'm right. Which I always am. Junior, God bless his soul, died for Freedom in Iraq last month. He woulda agreed with me a few months back, you just gotta realize that all that crazy talk in his last few emails to us were because he came under the influence of those godless shitbag pacifists he was in a unit with, talkin' about being told to bomb women and children and stuff. Them boys just gotta realize that to make an omelet, you gotta break some eggs. I know how war is, during the first Gulf War I had CNN on all day for the first day, and I pledged allegiance to the flag twice a day after that! Junior, you know I was pullin' for you hard on my blog. God rest yer soul. God bless America. Love it or leave it, you French-lovin' faggots!"

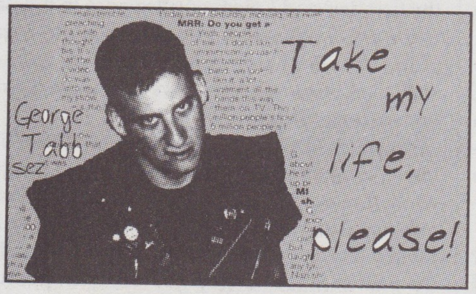
In short: George W. Bush, and his "morality issues" supporters have now officially appointed themselves to the position of abusive, asshole military dad I never had. Now that I am to be treated like an errant, belligerent teenager under the pain of law, I am going to use this opportunity to act like one to the best of my ability.

In conclusion: Fuck you, fuck you, you, fuck you, and fuck *you*.

According to exit polls, four million new evangelical Christian voters turned out for this election. Bush won by four million votes. 51% of the vote, in the election with the highest turnout in US history, does not make for a mandate. It makes for a civil war. Watch your back, assholes.

Wow, that felt kind of good.

xoxo —*Johnny Mink, POB 3026, Oakland, Ca. 94609 johngeek@hotmail.com*



"Drug dogs?" asks the drunk guy with the mustache at The Emereld Lounge here in Phoenix, as I quickly throw down my shot of Jose Cuervo, followed by my first bottle of Bud for the night.

"Yeah," I tell the guy, trying to ignore him because I can tell he'll never remember the conversation, tomorrow, anyway.

"So," he says as he spits at me, "these dogs, they were like, hooked on meth?"

"Meth?" I say, then remembering I'm in the desert, and people here do Drano and Sudafed for fun.

"Meth," he spits back at me.

I get a napkin from my pal Brian, the bartender, and wipe off the drool from my cheek.

"Look," I say to the drunken slump, "just forget about it."

"I wanna hear about the drug dogs!" he yells as loud as he can.

I swear his spit hits a wall fifteen feet away.

"Settle down," I tell him, "and I'll tell you."

*

"Yeah," I say to the crowd a few years back in front of the stage at the prison in Clearfield, Pennsylvania, "It's great to be here at The Rock!"

I look around. We are in a huge cellblock, and on the floor in front of us is an outline of a man. It turns out that this guy had hanged himself some years ago, and when they cut him down, that's where he landed. Above us are metal walks, and more prison cells. At the back of the cellblock is a small hole in the wall that reads "food." There's a security guard at the door.

"We're Furious George," I say into the mic to the eager faces, "and a funny thing happened to us on the way to the prison!".

Silence.

"Anyway, this one's called 'Jail House Rock!'"

*

"What do ya feel like eating?" Evan, my bass player with the bright green hair asked me as we drove in our roadie Adam's van. The van was bright yellow, and could easily pass for the Furious Mobile.

"I dunno," I said, laying in my usual spot, the futon in the back, next to the equipment. I was freezing and cranky. We had played Erie the night before, and had spent the whole night not getting anything. Especially sleep.

"Well, continues Evan, "The next exit has a Burger King and a Subway. I'm for the Burger King. Adam here wants Subway. He's a vegetarian. What about you?"

I sit up and look at the two in front of the van.

"Where's Michael? Where the hell is our drummer?"

"George, you moron," says Evan, "He's riding with Dick Army, don't you remember?"

The truth was I didn't remember. Much of anything. I had become dumb from touring. And from dying my hair blond.

"Oh yeah," I said, trying to act as if I knew, "Well I'd like Subway. I don't think I can handle anymore grease. I'm tired of having the 'rhea."

"But George," started Evan.

"You heard him," said our roadie, Adam, "he said Subway, it's two against one. Too bad!"

I laid back down on the futon, and snoozed a few minutes until the van parked. I also shivered a lot. It was fucking freezing.

"What will ya have?" asked the lady behind the counter at Subway.

I looked at all the meat wrapped in white paper, the lettuce, tomato, onions and shit in the little clear canisters, and the bags of chips.

"Um, ask him first," I said, pointing to Adam.

Adam ordered a veggie sub as I looked around the Subway/gas station/convenience store. Guys with rebel flag hats were shopping, and filling their pick-ups. I sort of wondered why they'd place a Subway in a truck stop.

"Your turn," said another girl behind the Subway counter.

I ordered a Subway Trio. Ham, turkey, roast beef. It was cheap. I also picked up a bag of Baked Lays and a bottle of Diet Pepsi. Road nectar of the Gods.

"Will that be all?" asked the lady behind the counter.

"Um, yeah," I answered.

"No gas?" she asked.

I told her that we were full of that, thank you.

"Would you like to make a donation for the Make-A-Wish-Foundation? We are trying to raise money for a dying child's last wish!"

I felt around my pocket in my ladies stretch jeans. I could barely afford the sub.

"Sorry," I said, "She'll have to go to Disney World on someone else's dime."

The woman gave me a scowl, and then over charged me for my food.

I made my way out of the restaurant/gas station/convenience store to the yellow van. Parked in the lot behind the place. I didn't have the keys, so I figured I'd stand around and wait for Evan and Adam, who did have them.

"Excuse me," said some tall, middle-aged guy as I stood in front of the passenger door, sipping my Diet Pepsi.

"Yes?" I said to him, with a smile on my face, and a gun in my head. Strangers talking to me when I don't get enough sleep is almost as bad as people throwing fish at me.

"What's your name?" said the guy.

"Um, George," I said, looking at him. He was wearing a warm jacket, jeans, boots, and looked sort of friendly.

"Hi George," he said, "My name is Bob, how are you today?"

"Fine," I told him. I hate friendly people at truck stops. Never know when they are gonna kill you.

"Do you mind if I ask you some questions?" he asked.

I don't know why, but I said that I didn't mind. I guess I was just bored while waiting for Evan and Adam to get their stuff.

"Well George," said Bob, "where are you from?"

"New York City, dude" I said to him. I had spent too much time in California.

"Where about? The city? State?"

"I live in the city," I told Bob.

"What's your address?" asked Bob.

"Well, Bob," I said to the friendly-looking guy with the warm jacket, while I myself was freezing in a sweat jacket, "I feel uncomfortable giving you that information."

"Well you can walk away anytime you want. I just want to ask you some simple questions."

"Bob," I said, "are you with The Make-A-Wish-Foundation? Because if you are, I already told them inside that I'm out of dough."

Bob shook his head no.

"Then are you with some Jesus Bible freaks or something? I'm a Jew. You people scare me. What if you're right and I am going to hell? I haven't packed."

Again Bob shook his head no.

"Well?" I asked Bob.

Bob then reached into his pocket and pulled out a wallet. He flipped it open and showed me a silver and blue badge. It said "Pennsylvania DEA" on it.

"Shit," I mumbled.

"You can walk away anytime," Bob reminded me, "but I do want to ask you some questions."

"What happens if I walk away?" I asked Bob, The Drug Enforcement Agency Guy who was out to make my life miserable.

"I can't tell you that," said Bob.

"Wonderful," was my reply.

"What ya got in the van," asked Bob.

"Musical equipment, t-shirts, records, all that sort of shit," I told Bob.

"You are a touring band?" he asked.

"Furious George," I told him.

"Curious George," he said, "great name".

Suddenly he was joined by another friend. He showed me his DEA badge. It was purty.

"So George, what's your social security number?"

I told Bob what it was. I don't know why. Probably because ever since I'd seen that DEA badge, I felt like I was going to have the 'rhea.

"Are you carrying drugs in the van?" asked Bob.

"No," was my reply, "We don't do drugs. Just Say No!"

Suddenly Evan with his green hair, and Adam come walking up.

"Hey guys," I said.

"We don't have any money for The Make-A-Wish-Foundation," said Evan to the guys, even before they spoke.

"Evan," I said, these gentlemen are from the DEA.

"Yeah right," said Evan, as he opened his sub and took a bite.

The guys showed Evan and Adam their badges. Their faces went white.

"Do you guys mind if we ask you some questions?" said Bob to my bass player and roadie.

I just shrugged my shoulders, and they both told Bob that they lived in New York, and gave him their driver's license numbers.

"Bob," I said, really cold, and getting tired of all this, "What do you want? I'm not meaning to be pushy, but we have a gig to get to, and we're tired."

"Well George," said Bob, "we are just out here, talking to normal folks like yourselves."

I look at Evan with his green hair, and Adam with his tongue and facial piercings. Uh-huh.

"And," continued Bob, "we are trying to stop the flow of drugs through our state. We'd like to know if we can have a dog just run around the outside of your van and see if he smells anything."

I looked at Adam and Evan. None of us did drugs.

"What if we say no?" I asked Bob.

He kind of scowled and told me that that was our choice. But he wouldn't tell us what would happen if we said no.

I asked Adam and Evan if it was okay to let a dog run around the van.

They both thought it would be okay, and besides, we knew we didn't have a choice.

Suddenly Bob whistles loudly, and a cop car that says "K-9 Unit" pulls up out of fucking nowhere. Out of it comes an older, meaner cop in a DEA jacket, and his German Shepherd, the drug sniffer.

"This here is my dog," said the older, meaner cop, "he's really mean, so stay away from him so he doesn't bite you. If I want him to, he'll attack, and keep biting you until I tell him to stop."

I look at the cop. Fucking lunatic. Has to be, with a partner who pisses on three legs.

"Okay," Bob says, "go ahead."

The mean cop with the DEA jacket and the dog start to circle our van. We are not really worried. None of us do drugs. We kinda hoped no one who was in the damn thing left anything.

"What if you find something?" I ask Bob.

"If it is like a roach or something, most likely we'll just confiscate it. If it's more, then, well, Pennsylvania has very good drug laws on the side of the defendant."

I hoped like hell no one had drugs in the van. I did warn everyone never to carry anything.

The dog ran around the van, sniffing, and found nothing.

"I told you so," I said to Bob, "we don't do drugs."

"Not so fast," said the mean cop, "we're not done. Maybe the dog's nose is just not ready. I know about you type of people."

We just looked at him in his DEA jacket. Putz. I halfway expected a camera crew to come out of hiding and tell us we were on *Cops*. This was so stupid.

The mean cop then gave the dog a rag. The dog bit it and started barking. Then tried to tear up the rag.

"Go find the drugs," said the mean old cop.

The dog ran around our van again, then started to hop up and down on the passenger side door. Then it started scratching and barking.

"I knew they had drugs," said the old mean cop.

Evan, Adam, and I just looked at the DEA guys and the dog in shock.

"Now what?" I asked.

"Well," said Bob, very calmly, "We'd like permission to search your van. The dog smells drugs, so we believe you are carrying something. Of course you can say no."

"What if we say no?" I asked.

"I can't tell you that," said Bob.

The dog continued to bark and scratch up the van. Adam started to bitch about the paint job.

"Well," asked Bob.

"It's Adam's van," I said to Bob, ask him."

"Well," said Adam, "I'm kind of uncomfortable with this."

"You can always walk away," said Bob.

"Let us search," said the mean cop, "we know there are drugs. The dog is never wrong!"

"Are we under arrest?" I asked Bob.

"No," he said.

"Do you mind if I call a lawyer?" I said. I didn't know what lawyer I was gonna call, but they always ask for one on *Law & Order*.

"You are not under arrest, but you can, if you want, as long as you do it right here."

I looked at Bob. He had an eat-shit grin on his face. There was no phone around. That's when I pulled out my cellular.

Punk rock.

"I'll call my dad," said Adam, "he's a lawyer in a big wig firm!"

I handed the phone to Adam, smiling at Bob, the other DEA guy, and the mean cop. I didn't smile at the dog. He'd bite my mouth off.

Adam dialed the phone and got his dad on the line. He explained our situation. They talked for quite a while. At two dollars a minute, what with the roaming charges and all.

"All we are gonna do is search the van and then let you go on your way," said Bob.

"Well Bob," I said, "I don't feel comfortable with that until I hear it is okay from Adam's dad, the lawyer."

Bob made a mean face.

"Yeah Dad," said Adam, "first it circled the van and nothing happened. Then they gave it a rag, and it went nuts!"

"That's not the way it happened," yelled the dog's partner, "if you are gonna tell the story, tell it right!"

"Excuse me," I said, "that conversation is private. Between a lawyer and his client."

"Well he should tell the story right!" yelled the cop.

Adam continued talking to his Dad, and the cops and dog got more and more antsy.

"Look," said Bob, "We'll just unload the van, let the dog sniff everything, and then send you on your way!"

"If we do let you unload the van, you are reloading it. That equipment is fucking heavy. You ever lifted a Marshall?"

"Okay Dad," said Adam into the cellular phone, "I'll give you to one of the cops."

"Here," said Adam, as he handed the phone to Bob, "My dad, the lawyer, wants to talk to you!"

"Your lawyer?" asked Bob.

"Yes," said Adam, "and my Dad!"

"Your Dad is a lawyer?" asked Bob. He was playing some sort of bullshit game.

Finally Bob gets on the phone and talks to Adam's dad for like fifteen minutes. At two dollars a minute.

What with roaming charges and all.

I eat my sub. I'm hungry.

Evan is able to get his coat out of the van after the jacket is searched. He's cold.

Adam just stands around. Depressed.

Finally Bob gives Adam back his dad. Adam talks for a few seconds, then says, "Okay, I'll call you back," and hangs up.

"What's up?" I ask Adam.

"They got us screwed. We gotta let them search the van."

I look at Bob. He smiles. I look at the other cop. He smiles. I look at the dog's partner. He looks like he's about to come.

"Go ahead," I say, "but you are not going to find anything. We are a straight edge band. Like Minor Threat. Or Uniform Choice. Just Say No!"

"Straight Edge?" asks Bob, "is that like with razors and mirrors?"

I tell Bob to never mind, and to search the van.

Adam unlocks the thing, and Bob pulls out our suitcases. The dogs sniffs those first. Nothing.

"Now we are gonna let the dog into the van to sniff around. We believe there is something in the front, so we won't search the back," explains Bob.

"If he pisses or shits in there, you are cleaning it up," I say. I hate animals in the van.

Peace Punks as well.

They smell it up. Then I have to take more showers.

"Stand back," says the mean cop. "You are about to see what this dog can do!"

I watch what the dog can do. He runs into the van and eats my bag of potato chips, that's what he does.

"Dude," I yell, "that dog just ate my chips!"

"We'll buy you another bag," says Bob, snidely.

The dog barks like crazy, then starts to scratch at the ashtray.

"He smells drugs!" yells the mean cop.

"He smells ashes," I say.

The cops take apart the ashtray of the van and look at and in it.

"Nothing," says the mean cop. "But there must have been something. The dog is never wrong."

"Well he's wrong now," I said, "like I told you, we don't have drugs. And you just wasted over an hour of our time. We have a gig to get to. In Clearfield. We are playing an old prison. Now a club. For the kids."

"Sorry," says Bob.

But he's not.

"And your fucking dog ate my chips," I bitch, "I paid for those things, and your four-legged friend chowed down on them. You should feed him more."

The old mean cop gets red in the face. "I know there were drugs in the van," he yells.

"We'll buy you some more chips," says Bob. He probably doesn't want to be sued.

"Skip it," I say, "we are late for the prison gig."

"Okay," says Bob.

"Hey Bob," I say, "what if we had just 'walked away'?"

"We would have confiscated your van, and then arrested you," he tells me.

"Oh," I reply.

"Well, bye Bob," I said to him as we reload the van and prepare to leave.

"Wait," said Bob, "you can't leave until you give us some stickers. We want stickers."

"But they're buried in the back," I begin.

"Let's just go," says the dog's partner.

The dog barks in agreement.

"No," says Bob, "We want stickers! Of your band! What are you called again?"

I look at a box near the side door of the van. It's full of stickers. From The Go-Go Rays. From Erie. Who gave them to us the night before.

"We're the Go-Go Rays," I say to Bob, and then hand him a shitload of stickers.

"The Go-Go Rays," he says, "Cool! I'll put them on my car."

"Whatever, Bob," I say.

"Well," says Bob, "It was nice meeting you guys, have a safe trip, and a good gig! In Prison!"

And with that they left in the Dog's Partner's car.

As we make our way toward the next gig Evan clears his throat, then speaks.

"Next time, it's Burger King."

*

"So what do you think?" I ask the drunk guy with the mustache as his face is buried deep in the bar of The Emereld Lounge.

He doesn't answer.

"What about that?" I say, louder.

He says nothing.

So I shake his shoulder and he just about falls off his stool.

"That guys been passed out for the last twenty minutes, homey," some kid in a Slayer t-shirt tells me.

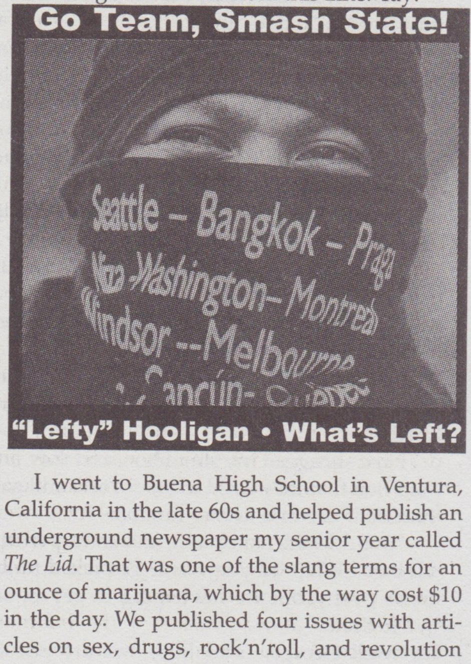
Doh.

Take My Life, Please.

Endnotes:

1. www.georgetabb.com
2. Got some great new stuff this month worth mentioning! Yay! Got a CD from The MAKKABEES who out-do the Jew schtick better than myself. They take the "old" classics, and make 'em punk rock! I'd love to see them and JEWDRIVER on a bill together! Also got the new ones from HIT & RUN and the OPERATORS, both on Longshot Records. I think I like HIT & RUN better, cause, well, they just seem more pissed off! Also got the new DWARVES album, *The Dwarves Must Die*. Best album of the year. It's the most punk rock thing I think I have ever heard. No shit. You'll see.
3. In the poppier department, I got a single from my pal, Barin Darnew, well, his real name is Brian, and he rocks. His CD on FC Records has two songs, "Rosebud" and "Historia-Abscondita," whatever the fuck that means. He sounds a lot like early Bowie, and damn, how I love him for that! Also got the NEW YORK DOLLS *new* record. Some live thing they recorded in the UK. I'd say it sucks, but that wouldn't mean much. I never really much liked that band, anyway. I did like Thunder's guitar playing, but it was better with The Heartbreakers, and with him now being dead and all, who cares. David Johanson is also someone I like a lot, and still do. But this disc is kinda a waste. Buy their old stuff if you wanna hear what really inspired old punk rock. And if you really care, buy the new DWARVES album, 'cause like I said, it's as punk rock as it gets!
4. Also from Stardumb, I got The STILETTOS *Making History By Repeating It* CD, and their compilation featuring really cool bands like the LULABELLES, WISEGUY, 69 CHARGER and BLACK RODEO. Oh, and the STILETTOS appear here as well. Good stuff. Between this label, and Whoa Oh Records in New York, there is still hope!
5. In the zines department, got some cool ones as well. *Messin With The Kid* outta Wisconsin rules. I also, of course, dig *The Fellowship Of The Tim*, which I have written about here before. And then there's *Mass Movement* outta the UK. It's like England's *MRR*. Only the paper doesn't leave ink stains all over your hands. It rocks and rules, and Tim, the guy who runs it, is really cool.
6. If you don't already know, I have a book out called *Playing Right Field: A Jew Grows In Greenwich* out now in all bookstores and on Amazon and Interpunk. Please read it—the *best* review I got for it was from this zine! Yay!

Go Team, Smash State!



"Lefty" Hooligan • What's Left?

I went to Buena High School in Ventura, California in the late 60s and helped publish an underground newspaper my senior year called *The Lid*. That was one of the slang terms for an ounce of marijuana, which by the way cost $10 in the day. We published four issues with articles on sex, drugs, rock'n'roll, and revolution using the local Unitarian Church's Gestetner mimeograph machine, distributing them legally by personally handing them out and illegally by stuffing them into student lockers. Our efforts quickly gained notoriety when the school principal denounced us as Communists in a public speech he made on the menace posed by Students for a Democratic Society, the quintessential 60s New Left organization that was factionalizing and fragmenting even as he exposed its real danger as a Moscow front.

Soon after the speech, and another issue of our paper featuring a long, favorable expose on SDS, the Unitarian minister approached us with a cryptic smile in the Church office while we were busy planning more mischief. The minister informed us that a local rightwing radio talk show host Joe Pyne imitator I'll call Chuck Crane wanted to contact whoever was behind *The Lid* for a live on air interview. We were more than game. In fact we made it our next mischief and promptly called the station number the minister had to set up the interview. Crane answered and laid down some ground rules, after which we asked him how he knew to find us through the Unitarian Church.

"Give me a little credit," Chuck snorted. "Where else could you print your paper?"

Where else, indeed. The Unitarian Church was Ventura's liberal bastion, known for a swinging singles scene and host to Quaker draft counseling every other week. We considered the place our radical clubhouse. It was our home away from home, and we used the Church to get away from the watchful eyes of our parents. We set it up to call Chuck Crane from the Church that evening.

Somehow I was elected to do the talking. I called in and got Crane's secretary who put me on hold while my comrades at the other end of the office switched on the radio and fiddled with the dial. The talk show was being broadcast like Muzak over the hold on the phone so I could hear Crane setting up for the call. He was saying something like "and I have one of the people behind this scurrilous rag *The Lid* on the line with me now" when he connected to my line and asked me over the phone "Are you there?" At that moment, we got Crane's show on the radio, so I heard my own voice come booming over the airwaves when I said, "Hello, yes I'm here." My words into the phone and the words from the radio were simultaneous, producing a weird, hollow echo-y effect. There was no seven-second delay for Crane to beep out any obscenities I might utter. Real time, as they say today. That realization plus the surprise of hearing my voice over the radio for the first time prompted me to whisper a low drawn-out "fuck" into the phone. So low and drawn out that Chuck Crane didn't hear it even while I could over the radio. My "fuck" went out over the Ventura County airwaves, perhaps deep into interstellar space to be picked up by aliens thousands of years hence.

MRR has an equivalent of the infamous seven-second delay, though it's not to screen out bad stuff but rather a by-product of the magazine's production schedule. This is my first column for a new year, January 2005. It went to press on November 25, 2004, meaning I stopped writing it sometime before that date. The printers did their job and sent it off to our distributors who had it on most newsstands and in most stores by the first or second week in December 2004. In this regard *MRR* operates no differently than other regularly published magazines. Yet as a columnist who relies in part on current events for subject matter, this delay can prove irksome. Thanks to quickly changing news, sometimes things I write about are hopelessly outdated or in need of serious updating by the time my column reaches *MRR*'s readers. If I want to write about May Day, I have to write my column by the middle of March. If I'm interested in a subject that happens after my column goes to press, but before the magazine's publication I'm in a real quandary. It didn't work out too well when I wanted to talk about the RNC protests in the October issue (#257) with a column deadline of mid-August, and I don't think my tongue-in-cheek inspirational header made it to the September newsstands in time. My timing for the election column was better in that the November issue (#258) was available two to three weeks ahead of the elections. The vagaries and ambiguities caused by *MRR*'s production cycle delay is why I now put date to print and issue information at the end of my columns.

Thanks to this delay I can now comment on the election results, although as we enter a new year folks might well be sick and tired of hearing any more analysis of this rather sordid and distasteful subject. I'll keep my comments brief. I was around for Richard Nixon's landslide victory over Democratic peace candidate George McGovern in 1972, at what was arguably the height of the anti-war movement. (Okay, alright, I confess, I voted for McGovern!) Nixon got sixty percent of the vote and 520 electoral votes to McGovern's paltry 37.5% and 17. Yeah Kerry lost, but nearly half of the country, or more precisely the voting public is opposed to the rightwing agenda pushed by Junior Bush. The Democrats should stop their insufferable whining, and liberals in particular need to take a lesson from the conservative wing of the Republican Party now firmly in power.

Known as Goldwater Republicans when they went down to a crushing defeat against Johnson with not quite thirty-nine percent of the vote and fifty-two electoral votes in 1964, these anti-communist, anti-New Deal, anti-UN, evangelical "moral values" conservatives were decimated as a force within the Republican Party as a result of that electoral debacle. The Republican presidential winner in 1968, Nixon came from the party's more liberal/internationalist wing, and some have argued that old Tricky Dick was actually this country's last liberal president. After 1964, the conservative Goldwater wing of the Republican Party returned to its roots—to churches, schools and other community and civic organizations—and began organizing around local issues and elections to rebuild their power within the party literally from the base up. By 1980, they managed to elect Ronald Reagan president and they've been steadily gaining political power ever since. The question becomes, are liberal Democrats capable of returning to their progressive roots and organizing the forty-eight percent of Americans who oppose the conservative Republican agenda?

I'm not holding my breath.

Instead, I'm doing a bit of solidarity work for what used to be one of the main roots of the Democratic Party, organized labor. A flying picket for striking union hotel workers in downtown San Francisco starts at 7 pm every Sunday, and I try to do a couple of hours before catching my eight hours so I'm refreshed for another forty-hour workweek. Simple working class solidarity, nothing fancy, nothing more. Unite Here Local 2 called a two-week limited strike around the issues of wages, contract length and health care against four SF hotels on September 29. Ten additional hotels responded to this labor action by locking out their workers in turn on October 1, so that about 4,000 union members are now on the streets fighting for their jobs. The fourteen hotels in question are part of massive international hotel chains, as well as members of the local Multi-Employer Group, giving them deep pockets and tremendous power. The union has responded by holding various high-profile protests with celebrity supporters to try to keep their struggle in the news. So far, the hotels have refused to budge.

I have three points to make regarding this David vs. Goliath struggle, beginning with the union response to our flying picket solidarity efforts. Between twenty-five and fifty community supporters of Local 2's picket lines show up on Sundays for the flying picket that moves from one to another striking hotel throughout the evening, the idea being not just to join the workers on the line but also to extend the union's picket with our efforts. The union has negotiated with hotel management to have limited "good faith" picketing areas in front of the hotels that don't actually block access. We lengthen the line until we're actually blocking the entrance, sometimes seeking out the back or side entrances in case the hotel tries to circumvent the pickets out front. Union picketers have been meekly handing out flyers to hotel customers asking them not to patronize the establishment. We get right up into the hotel guests faces and yell at them not to cross a picket line. Union picketers have been deferential to the police and hotel management. We've been much more confrontational, insisting to the cops on our legal right to picket anywhere so long as we keep moving, and going toe-to-toe with hotel security and management when they try to get us to back down.

We don't go against the wishes of the union workers, however, which is tricky and can occasionally underline the differences between the union's leadership and its rank-and-file. The union leadership, at least the representatives we've met on the picket line, by and large resist our tactics. Sometimes they insist we follow the union's agreements with management before we join the line, at which point we don't join. Other times we've enthusiastically joined a picket, only to have the line leadership freak over our tactics and ask us to back off. We try to scale things back before politely moving on to another hotel. On one occasion that I witnessed, the picket line leadership reluctantly allowed us to extend their picket, then actually grew enthusiastic when they saw the utter paralysis of the cops and hotel management to stop what we were doing. The rank-and-file union members in turn are often quite enthusiastic not just with our support but also with our more militant actions. It's exhilarating to witness when people realize they can take stronger, more effective action to push their demands. What's frustrating is to see picketers eagerly embracing our tactics at the same time the line leadership is asking us to back off. You can tell some of the older union workers on the line think of us as outside agitators and leftie troublemakers. They stick to their limited picket line, mumble along with the chants and give us sullen looks for what they consider grandstanding behavior. The freewheeling, ad hoc nature of the Sunday flying pickets, while reactive to the vested interests of the union leadership, is nowhere nuanced enough to respond to the interests or concerns of the rank-and-file.

Which brings me to point two, the flying picket itself. Billed as community solidarity, the flying picket was put together by a couple of individuals on the Bay Area's ultraleft milieu who are still instrumental to the event. It doesn't, however, have much more organization or coherence than I've sketched out above. Nor does it have much of its own identity apart from the people who show up on any given Sunday evening. One local group organizing for the flying pickets on a regular basis, and turning out a fair percentage of the bodies I might add, is the Bay Area Strikers Solidarity Organization (BASSO). In turn, a fair percentage of the membership of BASSO belongs to a tiny Trotskyist sect known as Labor's Militant Voice (LMV). Punch that name into google for the website of a truly tired workerist bunch of ice pick heads. If you suffer from insomnia, I recommend John Reimann's soporific "Where We Come From." Anyway, at some point in the evening, the BASSO but not so profundo folks break out their flyers, which call for, among other things, the hotel workers to lead a one-day shutdown of San Francisco much as was done by anti-war protesters in the city's financial district during the first days of Iraq war last March. Oh yes, and to fight to democratize their unions. I wrote a column for *MRR*'s March issue (#250) on the supermarket strikes down south, about working people going beyond unionism, yet I'm not so delusional as to insist that an ossified, arthritic AFL-CIO union structure and a somewhat decimated and demoralized rank-and-file attempt what amounts to a citywide general strike. It would be nice, no doubt about it, but so would workers councils and social revolution.

Once again, I'm not holding my breath.

BASSO/LMV may not have a Trot's chance in the old USSR of getting their general strike, yet by leafleting the picketing hotel workers as part of the flying picket they can sure as hell come off as representing the rest of us. You can tell I'm not real comfortable with that. I reprinted the above-mentioned column under the name *Red Impulse* and published it in a pamphlet along with an excellent article by Loren Goldner analyzing the Southern California grocery workers strike, just so that I could have something to hand the BASSO boors. Not quite mass leafleting material though. One of the flying picket instigators, a member of the Insane Dialectical Posse, along with other comrades, recently came up with their own ultraleft perspective on the hotel workers strike that fits nicely on a leaflet. Somehow I don't think that our flying picket bombarding the hotel workers with leaflets from a half-dozen different political perspectives is showing solidarity with their struggle. Which still leaves me with what to do with BASSO/LMV *de facto* hijacking the flying picket by distributing their insipid propaganda.

My final point is I'm damned tired of being upstaged by our mayor. Gavin Newsom has been widely credited by idiot pundits for helping to defeat Kerry by introducing the issue of gay marriage into the 2004 elections with his attempt to have the city of San Francisco perform gay weddings last February. Now he's decided that the hotels are being unfair in locking out their workers. Newsom has walked the union picket line and threatened the hotels with unspecified municipal action to get them to reverse their lockout. He says he's not pro-union, just pro-San Francisco because the folks who work in the hotels are residents, much more so than the multinational hotel chains that have locked them out. My problem is that I can't figure out how all of this is to Newsom's political advantage. This is the guy who ran for mayor from a centrist, Democratic Party pro-business position and won against Green Party contender Matt Gonzalez. Needless to say, his siding in effect with the union in this strike has not endeared him to the business community.

Perhaps I'm just annoyed at myself for kind of liking the guy.

Call it a new year's resolution, but I'm concentrating on organized labor struggles to counter the dark days of right wing reaction and assault ahead. Organized labor is not synonymous in my mind with labor unions by the way, but I'll clarify that in a future column. This is getting overlong, so let me conclude with a brief list of resources to flesh out this column:

1) For Loren Goldner's essay "Notes on Another Defeat For Workers in the US" go to http://home.earthlink.net/~lrgoldner.

2) Another comprehensive article "SoCal Grocery Worker Strike History & Analysis" by Natasha Moss-Dedrick can be found at http://www.indybay.org/news/2004/09/1696831.php.

3) The Insane Dialectical Posse's flyer on the hotel workers strike, along with other outstanding pamphlets, can be had by writing to IDP SF Bay, PO Box 35, Berkeley CA 94701 or IDP LA, PO Box 31372, Los Angeles, CA 90031.

4) Free copies of *Red Impulse* can be had by sending a SASE to PO Box 3684, Oakland, CA 94609.

Date to print: 11/15/04
For MRR #260 (1/05)

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... To find out my real name purchase my book, *End Time*, from AK Press (POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682) for $10. The book is called *Fim* in Portuguese and can be ordered from Conrad Editora (R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil) for R$ 24,90. I can be contacted at hooligan3@mindspring.com.

Zombie Picnic
elliott lange

Well, apparently my attempt to hypnotize a severely sleep-deprived Mike Thorn at last night's SIGNAL LOST/LOOK BACK AND LAUGH show didn't work, so here I am, having to abide by my deadline after all. Luckily, there's lots of wicked sick metal to write about this month, so let's get to it.

It would be improper to start things off with anything other than what is likely the most highly anticipated release in grindcore this year—the new full-length from the mighty PIG DESTROYER. I resisted liking these guys for a while (I'm a stubborn one) since they were already pretty well caught up in the hype machine—if such a thing exists at the grind level—but their last proper full-length, *Prowler in the Yard,* made them pretty impossible to ignore. Now with the new double-disc *Terrifyer*, they've got me loudly and often singing their praises. The sound quality on this is stunning—the guitars and drums are much fuller and heavier than their sometimes spotty quality on previous releases. What Pig Destroyer do really well is make each song distinct from each other—scene stalwart Scott Hull is a seemingly endless source of original, interesting riffs and they're just as devastating in their slower breakdown moments as they are at top speed. And then there's disc two, the epic single 37-minute track "Natasha," which is a slow, brooding counterpoint to the urgent speed and fury of their usual sound. Heavy and ominous, the song mutates through several stages of drug-addled, love-scorned dementia, incorporating periods of quiet ambience, foreboding keyboards, and thundering doom riffage. By the time this issue sees daylight, most of you will have this already, but if for some reason you missed it, err no more and pick up your new album of the year.

Last month I mistakenly pointed my readership to the *MRR* book review section for a review of the recently published history of grindcore and death metal, *Choosing Death*, by Albert Mudrian, which didn't make it into that issue but should appear in this one. As stated before, if you have any interest whatsoever in this genre, get this book. It's an absolutely essential and highly comprehensive account of how this either treasured or despised genre got to the state it's in now. Subsequent to finishing the book, I finally went out and got my other favorite Relapse release of late. I didn't have enough cash for the new NASUM, but I'm sure I'll have something to say about that next month. What I got was the double-CD REPULSION discography. Re-issuing their seminal *Horrified* full-length—and subsequently saving us from appalling eBay prices—as well as more demos than even the most die-hard fan would want to listen to in one sitting, this collection is a crucial artifact of grindcore history. REPULSION—and their legendary early incarnation, GENOCIDE—was basically the 2nd ever true grindcore band (read the book for more on that), and were responsible for the origin of the whole horror/gore motif, now ubiquitous and more than a little tired throughout the genre.

Portland, Oregon's Razorback Records is one label that has managed to buck that cliché by consistently releasing well above-average, horror-obsessed death/grind bands over the course of their five-year existence. Part of the appeal of Razorback's bands (including BIRDFLESH, MACHETAZO, ENGORGED, EMBALMING THEATRE, and the reformation of the legendary GENERAL SURGERY) and their "ethos" in general, is their sense of humor and lack of metalmeathead mentality, which is held in such a balance as to never get in the way of the sheer brutality and quality of musicianship or to denigrate any of the bands to novelty status. As testament to this, I was present at a thoroughly punishing ENGORGED show here in SF during the rather, shall we say, "sensitive" week after September 11, 2001. In true form, the camo-clad band paused between songs and announced "This is a song about some real fucking terrorists," before launching into a blazing tribute to Cobra Commander.

Back to the records at hand. Portland's own SPLATTERHOUSE deliver *The House that Dead Built*, a devastating, no-frills assortment of immediately catchy death/grind riffs, relentless speed, undeniable energy and blazing blast beats with a ridiculous snare sound echoing like caskets being hammered on by a horde of drunken necrophiliacs. Even better though is GHOUL's "concept" record *Maniaxe*, a non-stop assault of CARCASS riffs and vocals mixed with total SOD-styled mosh cues. Worth it for the track "Ghoul Hunter" alone, the riffs are insanely catchy and the lyrics are an entertaining read, as is their meticulously detailed homepage, www.creepsylvania.com, describing their homeland of Oaklan....err, I mean Creepsylvania. A good introduction to all the mayhem Razorback has to offer is the low-priced label sampler, *The Horror Hive—5 Year Anniversary* compilation CD with 33 tracks from all their bands. Find out more at www.razorbackrecords.com.

Another prominent local metal band (not that GHOUL are local, right?) have a new release that's been getting some attention of late—LUDICRA's *Another Great Love Song*, this time, oddly enough on Alternative Tentacles. On a totally divergent side note—anyone heard the Jello/MELVINS collaboration? Worst piece of shit ever. Fortunately, Jello has still reserved some taste in picking bands for his label, cuz this is a fine, depressively epic metal release and a worthy follow-up to the masterful *Hollow Psalms* on Life is Abuse from a couple years back. To my ears, *Love Song* is a more solemn, less immediate or aggressive effort than *Psalms*, though still effectively weaving moody minor-key melody amidst the speedier black-metal moments. This is gonna take some time to grow on me, but then, *Psalms* did too, and the song-craftsmanship definitely encourages repeated listening.

Speaking of Life is Abuse, with such great releases as UNPERSONS, LE SCRAWL, BRAINOIL, and in particular, YETI spending significant time in my stereo of late, Mauz is establishing himself more firmly than ever as running one of the best and most eclectic labels in heavy music. *Volume Obliteration Transcendence*, YETI's follow-up to their equally bizarre *Things to Come* LP, is a surreal hour-long acid-trip of epic proportions with swirling keyboards and lengthy build-ups that release into noisy churning and acid-dripping effects, like a mix of MAN IS THE BASTARD, SPACEBOY, PINK FLOYD, and 70s prog. Definitely a unique and captivating listening experience—I'm pretty sad they had to cancel their tour out here a day before I was set to see them with LUDICRA and ASUNDER.

While we're in the doomy forgotten realms of the later alphabet, it's high time I mentioned the equally oppressive sounds of the mighty YOB, who have delivered what is undoubtedly one of the finest stoner/doom/sludge releases of recent months, *The Illusion of Motion*. Fire up the bong, stretch them neck muscles and prepare yourself for some serious slow-motion headbanging with this ungodly heavy new release, the 3rd in as many years from these prolific Portland doom-mongers. This band is destined for prominent stature in the scene, as in addition to astute riff-writing, YOB have the extremely rare advantage of a unique singer who can actually sing, sort of in the same way that SLEEP did (not that the vocals sound like SLEEP cuz they don't, I just mean that both bands had more than just generic screaming). The YOB guy actually has an ultra high-pitched Geddy Lee sort of voice, but I *promise* that as bad as that sounds, it works and is in no way annoying—it just makes the songs all the more unique. Like YETI, YOB favor the 4-songs-in-55-minutes framework, so there's plenty to hear in each song: Long, slow build-ups, multiple riffs and just insane heaviness.

I've been trying to review the *Things to Do When You Should Be Dead Anyway* LP from Virginia's FORENSICS ever since I started this column, but I just kept running out of space. Well, it shall be omitted no more—the fact that it's been on my turntable consistently for the last four months has helped remind me. It comes as no surprise that this band features members from such bands as PG.99, CORN ON MACABRE, and OLD MAN GLOOM, as they pretty much sound like a mix of all of the above, particularly OLD MAN GLOOM. This is a bit more upbeat in the vein of sludge rock like say, 16, but the band manages to work through a variety of moods and tempos, and should be a major point of interest for anyone into the fertile Virginia scene or the OLD MAN GLOOM album, *Christ*mas that I raved about last issue. LP on Trash Art, CD on Magic Bullet.

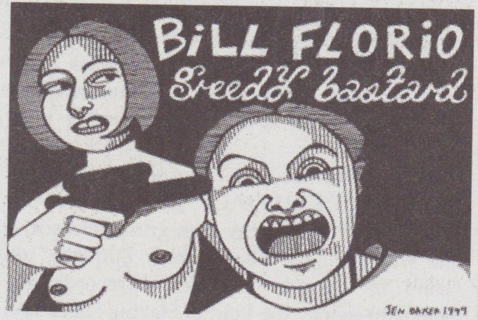
Also in the "record that's been sitting around for months begging for rightfully-deserved attention" department is the bizarre quartet that is BARONESS—understandably so with such an insipid name and un-inspiring cover art. But their ill-chosen moniker belies the musical maelstrom contained therein. Their *First* CDEP/12" (Hyperrealist, www.hyperrealist.com) consists of a mere three songs, but they contain more riffs than the average hardcore band writes in their lifetime, combined into the most dizzying A.D.D. arrangements possible. Almost every riff will remind you of another band, but there are so many and they switch so frequently, it ends up being refreshingly original rather than derivative, like maybe the CHAMPS meets CAVE IN mixed with bits of TRAGEDY-like dark hardcore, alternating with stoner rock moments and the odd black metal blast thrown in for good measure.

In the Relapse-minor-leagues department, Canada's FUCK THE FACTS have delivered one of the most noteworthy tech-grind releases of late with their CD "Backstabber Etiquette" on Grind It! Records (www.grinditrecords.net). Featuring exactly the kind of blazing speed and whiplash-inducing tempo changes that fans of KALIBAS and CRYPTOPSY expect from their speakers, FUCK THE FACTS have that rare ability to mix top-notch death metal musicianship with grindcore intensity, all with catchy, memorable riffs and transitions. Definitely a band to watch.

Finally, in the interest of narrative symmetry, I'm going to end on a very non-metal note here, by singing the praises of my favorite non-heavy band, who rocked the stage at Gilman last night—the inimitably energetic LOVE SONGS, whose new album, *All Branches, No Trunk* (625 NotSoFastcore/New Disorder Records) just might even surpass KILL THE CLIENT and PIG DESTROYER as my overall favorite album of the year. Once you're done destroying the dance floor with all this metal, it's time to get happy and sing along to the most insidiously catchy collection of punk songs ever. I don't recommend this lightly. I realize the credibility I'm in danger of losing by vaunting a pop punk album in a grind column, but trust me, or trust Max 625, who also saw fit to release his first "pop" album with LOVE SONGS—this is a fantastic record. In addition to the great songs, Craigums has managed to produce one of the heaviest sounding punk records ever. The production as a whole and the guitars in particular sound incredible. Plus LOVE SONGS defies the standard 3-chord stereotype of their usually stagnant genre with surprisingly complex arrangements. Such tracks as "Luv Song" and the title track are borderline math-rock with odd time signatures and constantly changing, never repeating parts. Don't even think of this as pop punk, it's just a near perfect *rock* record which is impossible not to like— plus these guys rule live, too.

Well, I still left plenty out this month, so sorry if you sent stuff in that didn't get reviewed. I always listen to everything but I just don't have the space to write about everything. Don't worry—if I like it I will write about it…eventually. Thanks to everyone who's written. Sorry if I'm slow in responding, but like with the records, I'm not ignoring you, I'm just lazy. I mean busy. Get in touch or send stuff for critique to: Elliott Lange, 701 Broderick St., San Francisco, CA 94117, cromlaughs@hotmail.com.

"I was bound and gagged in the dining room/Surrounded by the funk of fetid breath/The quartet of maniacs hunched over me/And forced me to listen to Anthrax and Megadeth - "Ghoul Hunter" by GHOUL.



So, I had a little talk with Tom from AGAINST ME! on the phone. I apologized to him for making his band a target and implying that they partake in the fucked up practices that a lot of other bands actually partake in, like making bands pay to tour with them, forbidding local bands to open for them, snorting coke off 13 year old boy-tits, etc. They don't do any of that shit. They are actually one of the few bands that are using package tours to help their local scene. They split the money evenly; they try to show a good amount of integrity in everything they do. I think they have shown the ability to say no in a lot of categories where other bands will just do what they're told is best for the band. It's getting to be a very scary time for larger shows, and it's probably much harder time to be a big-draw band than ever before.

I told Tom that I think that a popular band should show some responsibility and make a certain effort to have local bands play every show. He said that they do have local bands open for them, just not every show. Even better, after thinking about it for a couple of days Tom called me back and let me know they will put a link on their website letting bands contact them to try to get on the bills in the future.

Tom agreed with me that having local bands open up is good for local scenes everywhere. So I encourage all real bands (Real meaning that you actually have ten or twelve original songs, a *name*, and your own equipment) We all know one of the reasons local bands are a pain is because half of them operate like Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure. I tell you right now, if you fit into the style of music AGAINST ME! plays and really like them, they will do their best to get your band on the bill with them. AGAINST ME! is in between booking agents at this point, but go to their website www.againstme.net and there should be a link there to get in touch with them by the time you read this. If there isn't, email me and I'll make sure you get the phone numbers you need. Tom told me that every show on their tour that didn't have a local band opening, didn't simply because no one asked.

He also said if I had contacted him directly about this beforehand he would have been much more willing to help, but instead I attacked them not to mention the foul odor. AGAINST ME! doesn't want to have anything to do with me or *MRR* at this point. But I told him, "Hey it's ok if you tell me and *MRR* to fuck off, because if you do the right thing it doesn't really matter what you say or where you say it. Actions show how good you are not words."

I mean really, as far as being a journalist I fucked up. I could have shown the column to Vanessa at Fat Records and she would have been more than happy to have those guys talk to me beforehand. I admit I wrote this just to stir up shit and make a scene. My hope is that this will end with some good ideas going around and get people thinking about things in a new light on the zine side of things as well as the band side. There is just as much problem with this here mag having the reputation for tearing bands apart no matter how much they try to do the right thing, and this sort of thing is not excusable either. I think I made a statement here with my antics when it comes to making everyone rethink what they are writing about and why. In the future if one of the columnists really wants to talk shit about a certain band, they should at least give them a fair chance at explaining themselves before they are attacked. I really don't write anything that I wouldn't say to everyone's face. All my friends' bands that I've told I didn't like can attest to this. (cough MENSCH)

I have to give Tom credit though; he did call me to talk about it. Even if we didn't agree on everything, we both reached out and made the effort; he passed the human being test in my book. They will probably be talking about this crap for a lot longer than they will ever want to and in the end it will make them look good.

Also, I hope other bands that a mass amount of kids want to see will have the balls to make sure there is a local scene band opening for them. This isn't about me or AGAINST ME! or some sort of popularity contest This is about thinking about things and talking about them and doing what is all-in-all just good sense. I may have a weird way of inspiring people to do things, but if it gets done I really don't care if it's not popular. No one's gonna have any new ideas pushed on them if it reads to like a history textbook.

There are a lot of people up there trying to put control on what we say and do. There are large companies that are looking out for their best interests and really don't care about you or me or any band or zine. There has to be a clear divide between us and them. This is why I like the shake up. You shouldn't be the vegetarian who loves animals and then beats his girlfriend. Jerry Lewis is still a prick no matter how much money he raises, he actually called someone "a retard" on the telethon last year. You can't sell your soul to Clear Channel and then play some secret show for someone who got hit by a car and say you have integrity. If kids are showing up and spending their parents' money on your band you instantly have the power to tell these blowhards "no." That saying "no," when others tell you what your best interests are, is what makes us better than some poor slob who wears a suit and says "yes" to everything he is expected to say "yes" to.

Damn I think it's like three months in a row now I summed up punk rock in one sentence, and it's not even the same damn sentence.

bill@candids.com

I guess I should introduce myself—you've probably noticed the name on the column header. Maybe it's even familiar to you. If not, my name's Al, I live in the Boston area, I publish a zine called *Suburban Voice* (very sporadically—it's been over a year since the last one but it's not dead yet) and have been doing that since 1982, when it was called *Suburban Punk*. I also DJ one day a week on a community radio station in Boston and upload the show to the internet (see details at the end of the column). I've been doing the radio show since early 2000 and, in some ways, I enjoy doing it more than writing. I look at it as an audio version of my zine, getting to share music that stirs something inside, and perhaps offer commentary about non-musical issues.

You could say I'm an old-timer. A punk rock lifer. 44 years old and I can't get the stuff out of my system. But, even with the larger mid-section and feeling my age a bit after a night in the pit, I refuse to accept aging. I refuse to stop doing things I enjoy even though I'm supposed to be more-or-less settled into my life. Sure, I'm married (my wife Ellen is the greatest and puts up with my musical obsessions with amazing patience) and I live in the 'burbs and, on the outside, it looks like a typically bourgeois existence. But that doesn't mean I'm complacent. I still feel restless. I still feel like I don't really fit in with mainstream society. And punk has certainly provided quite a bit of the stimulus, working in tandem with an anti-authoritarian mentality. That's what always appealed to me about punk—anti-authoritarianism. That's why I have little patience for Christian punks, conservative punks, and the like. This is music of rebellion—whether it's personal rebellion or something on a larger scale. Even when the content isn't necessarily overtly political, it's the act of creating something outside the mainstream that makes it rebellious.

This is the music that's inspired me, moved me, and hell, sometimes kept me alive for more than a quarter century. It's still very important to me. Sure, the whole punk/hardcore universe is far from perfect and it seems as though there's has been the same cliquishness, pettiness, bickering, and arguments for over 20 years. I even got away from it for a while for a number of reasons, but I've really been drawn back in recent years, once I realized how important it is to me. Felix Havoc has talked about the resurgence of hardcore and punk in recent years, how the DIY scene is alive and thriving and I agree with him completely. It took me awhile to realize that the DIY community was where I felt the most comfortable and where I really connected, but I'm still here. It's also reassuring to see other people sticking around. There aren't a ton of over 30 people involved in the DIY punk scene in Boston but, on a national and international scope there certainly are, and it's always cool to see people in my age range still kicking ass. I think of Bill Chamberlain from CAUSTIC CHRIST and BEHIND ENEMY LINES and the other members of that band. I think of the guys from SEEIN' RED and DROPDEAD. I think of the aforementioned Mr. Havoc. That's just off the top of my head and the list grows longer with each year.

Anyway, I'd like to thank Thorn and Golnar for giving me the opportunity to write for *MRR*. I've been reading it since day one and have contributed from time to time, though not regularly. As for what form my column will take, it's fairly open-ended but I'll probably write about political/social issues, some personal stuff (don't worry—I won't go all emo on ya) and, of course, music, which is the reason people read this 'zine in the first place. You can take it or leave it—it's just one person's opinion and I'm not trying to tell people what to think. You're wrong if you disagree, of course, but still...

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So, what a time to write my first column for *MRR*. November 3, the day after America committed suicide, to quote a long-ago SUBHUMANS song. The Canadian SUBHUMANS, as opposed to the UK SUBHUMANS. It seems as though people pick one SUBHUMANS over the other, but I've always enjoyed both bands. In fact, the SUBHUMANS with the still-skinny Dick Lucas played a great show in Boston the other night. A crappy venue with a fucking stage barricade but a great show and, let me tell ya, "Religious Wars," "Big Brother," "This Year's War" (a newer song), and especially "Black and White" with its tagline "remember the day the country died?" ring in my brain as I write this. Speaking of Canada, it's really tempting to move there but, considering that the New England winters are rough enough, I don't think I'll be doing that anytime soon.

I've been switching back and forth between listening to Air America Radio, which is like a big group therapy session today, and political punk and hardcore. I hardly ever listen to Crass but pulled out my *Best Before* comp so I could hear "You're Already Dead" and "Don't Get Caught." DILLINGER FOUR's "The Great American Going Out Of Business Sale" will be crashing through the speakers in a little while, and you know I'll be singing loudly when Paddy gets to the part about how he's "had enough of all shit about 'making do,' 'playing ball,' 'the way things are' and 'dealing with it.'"

Yeah, I'm feeling kind of down. Not a gripping despair, but certainly not pleased with the prospect of this country facing four more years of perhaps the worst president in history. Certainly the worst president in my lifetime, and that includes Reagan. I know a lot of *MRR* readers and staff members took the fuck 'em all stance, saying that Kerry was no better than Bush. I'm not a big fan of John Kerry, but I don't think he would have appointed reactionary fascists to the Supreme Court or the lower courts. With Bill Rehnquist possibly stepping aside due to ill health and the possibility of more retirements over the next four years, Bush will have the opportunity to put through more justices in the mold of Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia. He's already started doing it on the lower levels and, with the Republican-controlled Congress, who knows what havoc he'll be able to wreak on the judiciary. And that will affect this country a lot longer than the next four years. Many of Bush's lower-level judicial appointments have been reactionaries. According to a recent report by the US Commission On Civil Rights, "Many of his nominees and appointees do not support civil rights protections. The effect may be eventual weakening of civil rights laws... some of President Bush's non-minority nominees hold views that would limit the scope and strength of civil rights laws, as do some of his minority and female nominees."

Let's take a look at a few of those nominees during Bush's first term—the first is Charles Pickering, whose appointment was blocked twice by the Senate. But during the Senate recess in early 2004, Bush bypassed the process and appointed Pickering to the bench. According to the report: "Of particular concern to civil rights advocates was a 1994 case in which Pickering actively sought a reduced sentence for a man convicted of cross burning, a widely used hate group intimidation tactic. At one point Pickering referred to the act as a 'youthful prank,' diminishing its symbolic representation of race baiting and hatred. Pickering took the further step of contacting a friend at the Department of Justice during the trial to try to get the offender's sentence reduced, a move considered unethical by several legal experts...Pickering has also argued for a more narrow application of the Voting Rights Act and suggested that, generally, discrimination cases have no bases."

Pickering is expected to retire at the end of 2004, since he's in his 60s. But Bush also appointed William Pryor, the former Alabama Attorney General, in similar fashion. He's an ardent foe of abortion rights. He's called Roe v. Wade "the worst abomination of constitutional law in our history." Pryor is a right-wing extremist, and opposes not only abortion rights but also civil liberties, gay rights, voting rights, and the Americans With Disabilities Act. The left-wing group People For The American Way have a report on him at their website, www.pfaw.com. Unlike Pickering, Pryor is in his early 40s, so he may some day be a candidate for the Supreme Court. In any case, he now sits on the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi, and his beliefs are dangerous for democracy, civil rights and civil liberties.

That's just the judiciary. I don't have the space to write about the ongoing debacle in Iraq or the weakening economy. Actually, I am starting to feel a bit more despair. Time to blast the music...

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RECENT RECORDS THAT ROCK MY WORLD

CONFA FURY/NITZ—Split 7" EP (Complete Distort)

Two bands that threaten to ride off the fuckin' rails—the NITZ have a new full-length album on Reptilian. The songs on this three song EP don't appear on the album, though. Speedy, slammin', whammo punk thrash in the same vein as ZEKE, and older DWARVES, and including a SCHOLASTIC DETH cover (!?). CONGA FURY hold up their end of the distort bargain. Trebly, noisy production and a barrage of rockin' rollin' thrashin' feedbackin' speedcore. Heads still spinning. (403 S. Broadway, Baltimore, MD 21231, www.reptilianrecords.com/completedistort)

SELF DEFENSE—7" EP *Megaton Punk Disruptor* (Wintermute)

SELF DEFENSE have been defunct for awhile, having scattered into such bands as SLEEPER CELL, DRAGZILLA, LAST WORDS and CLUSTERFUCK but they've got a posthumous 7" EP out (they had another EP and a split with XFILESX), a good year after they recorded it. Straight-ahead bruising hardcore, but with some cool twists, such as the cowbell that pops up unexpectedly and the Maiden-esque licks for "Samizdat." A scorching finale. (38 Wall St., Valhalla, NY 10505, jeff@gogodragzilla.com)

KEGCHARGE—*Sadistic War Glory* LP (Hardcore Holocaust)

From Tex-ass but probably not about to be invited to the next ZZ Top BBQ (after all, the bearded ones support the liar-in-thief). KEGCHARGE have a trebly, pounding hardcore sound that rumbles along with brute force. And the lyrics are no less blunt: "God bless America/this land that I love/I stood beside her/and watched her burn." It has that rattling, raging sound associated with the members' other projects, WORLD BURNS TO DEATH and SPAZM-151. Fancy foldout sleeve with some provocative nazi imagery—which I suppose serves as a commentary about their disdain with the state of affairs in this so-called great nation. You can tell right away, with the Dumbya samples that are mixed into the opening "Blood-Mix-Oil," as well as the aforementioned "God Bless America," "Medal Of Honor" and "Throat Lacerated By Tripwire." You won't see KEGCHARGE sporting those yellow ribbon magnets, I imagine. If KEGCHARGE made magnets, I'd proudly sport one on my vehicle. (www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

SLEEPER CELL—s/t 7"EP (Cries Of Pain), s/t 7"EP (Partners In Crime)

One of the best bands to emerge in Boston in the last few years; the thing is, none of 'em are Boston natives, as they all moved here from other states. Their new bass-player, who joined after these records were recorded, is an immigrant from Poland. Raw, high-energy songs with a strong political bent. Some Dis- and Swedish influences in there, but I'm also reminded of the flailing intensity of the late, great TALK IS POISON. Both of these EPs are worth tracking down. (Cries of Pain, PO Box 1004, Windsor, CT 06095, criesofpainrecs@hotmail.com/Partners In Crime: PO Box 11787, Portland, OR 97211)

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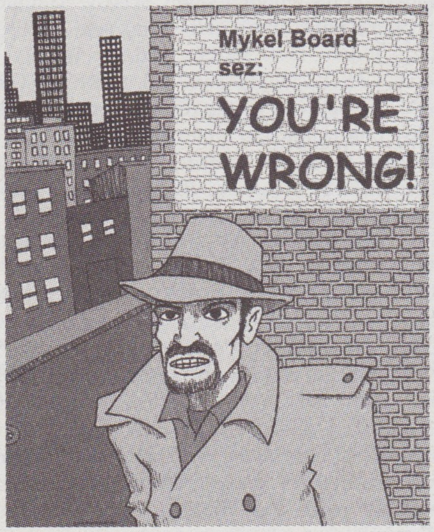
That's it for now. Questions? Comments? Al Quint/PO Box 2746/Lynn, MA 01903/e-mail: suburbanvoice@earthlink.net. You can check out my radio show "Sonic Overload" on the web at http://sonicoverload.moocowrecords.com. The site is updated once a week.



ONE

"How can you like The Yankees? It's like liking General Motors." —Ronny Burstein, a kid in my 10th grade class

I'm madder than Michael Moore at an NRA convention. The Red Sox, defying The Babe, win eight straight. Four against The Yankees. *Jezus*! First, the World Trade Center. Then, the Red Sox. What's next? President Kerry? Excuse me while I throw up.

Sports? I'm gonna write about sports??? No. I'm gonna write about Baseball. Baseball is special. It's a "sport" for people who don't like sports. You'd never see Gary Wills, John Updike, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Marianne Moore, or Stephen King at a football game. They go to (went to) and write (wrote) about baseball.

Baseball isn't brute force. It's not kicking a ball around. It's one hero at a time facing nine others, intensely, more than thirty times a game. It's strategy, luck, heart. Like a great novel, it has tension and excitement when nothing happens. Ah, what a game!

Boston's victory was a sad day in baseball. Not for you, but for me, as a Yankee fan. Why am I a Yankee fan? Boston is the underdog team. Their players are scruffy. Except for an oriental deficiency, they're a mix of races, classes, and types. Their history—though not their fanbase—is a hodge-podge of races and cultures.

Cleveland was the first American League team with a black player. The Red Sox followed quickly. The Yankees were the *last* of the early teams to have a Negro.

How can I possibly like The Yankees? Boston is so punk rock. It's the ragtag underdog of a team—no discipline, no couth, no leadership, and lots of chaos. The Yankees are a clean-cut dictatorship, a well-oiled machine, a product of money, with self-confidence that crosses into arrogance.

Last month I wrote that I fast during Yom Kippur because I'm a Jew. That's what Jews do. I could say I like the Yankees because I'm a New Yorker. That's what New Yorkers do. But it's not enough. So why? I'm not sure.

I get a clue to the answer when a Fox Five dork interviews Steven King at the game.

"Boston is America's team," he says.

At first, I don't get it. The Yankees are conquering monsters, gobbling the opposition, giving no mercy, a killing machine. What could be more American than that?

But most Americans, at least those outside New York and St. Louis, support Boston. They root for those bovine underdogs like Christians root for George W. What is it? Why was the Boston win "a storybook ending?" It sounds like a horror story to me.

Flash to the Palisades Parkway. I drive in my rented Taurus. Ahead of me, a tank-like Mercedes SUV has a license plate that reads "MYCAR." Next to the license plate is a sticker in the shape of a looped yellow ribbon. "SUPPORT OUR TROOPS" it says under the ribbon.

The *New York Times* reports that American troops kill an average of 200 Iraqis a day. The *New York Post* has a picture of some guys in ski masks ready to behead a single captive. "MONSTERS" is the headline. Who are the monsters?

The more I look at it, the more I get it. America is not the big bully that walks over helpless innocents. It is the big bully that walks over helpless innocents that *thinks* it's a scruffy underdog fighting for freedom. America is The Yankees looking in the mirror and seeing a Red Sox reflection.

Boston is the lie. New York is the truth. I'll take truth, thank you. But I guess I'll have to wait until next year.

TWO

"Girls want two things from a guy: A dick and clean fingernails. Anything else you've heard is a myth." —LNA G.

"Ah well, I got one of them."—Me

I walk through Grand Central Station, past the first wastebasket in the hall. The ad on it says "DIRT IS GOOD FOR YOU." Turning the corner, I see another ad on another wastebasket. This one says, "WHAT'S LIFE WITHOUT DIRT?" Maybe some new product has named itself Dirt. This must be the *teaser* phase. You know, where they advertise something but don't tell you what it is. They spend a month piquing your curiosity. Then they spring it on you. Some boring product that's perfectly good under another name, or something new that's not worth having at all. A trick.

Still, I'm curious. What product would choose the name Dirt? I might buy something called dirt, but would you? If advertisers modeled themselves on my taste, only bankruptcy lawyers would make money. So, what's the appeal?

Then I notice the subtle Wisk label in the corner of the ads. Dirt is okay, it's telling you, as long as you wash it off.

America hates dirt. People destroy their skin. They create new diseases by avoiding dirt. Kids develop asthma because their parents over-clean everything they touch. This makes the kids hypersensitive to the real world outside. That makes asthma.

Germicide soap kills off weak bacteria, so the strong ones can multiply and spread. Aluminum-filled deodorant is responsible for an epidemic of Alzheimer's disease. At least their armpits won't smell.

And what do I think about dirt? Do I like it? Well, sort of. There are all kinds of dirt. There's dirt dirt, the kind that's on the ground and plants grow out of. Some call it soil. To me, soil has a much fouler image. Like, "soiled bedsheets."

Besides dirt dirt, there's the dirt we talk about when we mention pollution, like in dirty air or dirty water. There's the wink-accompanied dirt we talk about when we say someone has a "dirty mind." There's the dirt of action, a counter to laziness or indifference. We say, "She's more than talk. She's willing *to get her hands dirty.* There's dirt as an epithet. Like Iggy Pop singing she's just *dirt*.

Each dirt has its own connotation. Its own feeling. Its own smell. Even body dirt is not simply dirt. A "dirty" person can have a sexy armpit smell, or gag-inducing brown-striped underpants. I guess there are different scents for different folks. Some people love the smell of shit. Even someone else's.

But dirt dirt, itself? I love it.

Flashback: Lake Hovsgul, Mongolia, the cleanest lake in the world. Unpolluted fish practically jump into your arms. Tucked away in an isolated section of the county, you can only get there by jeep.

By the lake is a marsh, what tree-huggers call *wetland.* I walk from my camp spot to the lake. With each step, my boot sinks to the ankle. *Thrisssss.* I strain to lift it. When it is free, air rushes into the mud vacuum with a fart-like *pffffff.* So there I walk. *Thrisssss...pffffff.... thrisssss...pffffff...thrisssss...ffffff.* Step after slow step.

My black boots are brown. Up to the ankle. It's a slimy brown that drips down the sides and slowly seeps into the space between the soles and the uppers. Boots? Why?

Balancing on one leg, I remove my boot, take off the sock, and roll up my pants leg. I set my naked foot down on the mud.

The cool mud curls around the bottom of my soles. Squeezes between my toes. Caresses my body like a lover.

As I sink in it, I feel the sex of the great earth mother pulling my naked foot into her womb. Tougher to balance now, I try pulling off my other boot and sock. As I lift my leg, I tumble, falling backwards. To protect myself, I push my hands behind me and slap the ground like a judo wrestler slapping the mat to break his fall. The slap scatters the mud in twin fountains. It spews brown, high into the air, coming down over my face, my body. It's like falling into the arms of a lover. For a few moments, I lie there and just enjoy it.

"Oi!" comes a call from the distance. Yeah, they say "Oi" in Mongolia.

It's a man in thigh-high boots leading a dozen or so yaks. I can smell them, like wet carpet, from where I lie.

"Sain, sain," I shout back. Hoping that he'll understand my "good good," as "I'm okay."

It doesn't look like it. He's coming closer. The yaks stop about 500 yards away from me. He continues. Looking about 40, he's got a square, squat body and oriental fringes of a beard.

Before long, he's standing over me, with an arm outstretched. I take it and he pulls me up out of the muck. "Bayarla," I say, thanking him.

He spews a lot of words in Mongolian. I shrug, telling him, "Bid olgach gui bain." (I don't understand).

He smiles and motions like he's brushing himself off. I guess he's telling me I'm a mess and should clean up.

"Za, za," I tell him, nodding in agreement.

We go off in opposite directions.

After sun down, when it's as black as an East Village clothing store, I take a flashlight and return to the mud. Listening for any signs of life, I hear only the gentle water of the lake, and the hum of crickets.

Quickly, I open my fly and drop pants and underpants to my knees. Plunging both hands into the wet ground, I scoop up a mass of soft mud and press it between my legs. Instantly, I harden. Scooping up more mud, I rub myself in growing ecstasy until I flow white and liquid, fertilizing mother earth with my own seed.

Then I realize what a mess I made.

End Of Flashback

Don't think it's sexy? Come on, what about mud-wrestling? Why do you get hard watching that? Naked girls toss each other around in dirt. Hands, breasts, arms, legs slowly browning, like an oil paint tan. Pubic hair tangled and matted with mud. You come just thinking about it.

Last month I wrote about the evils of our lives. I called them G-d's shit. Maybe I was too hard on shit. Maybe I was falling into the trap of dirt-equals-bad. Maybe I was too American.

Dogs sniff shit as a matter of course. They love it, sometimes they eat it. Humans probably did too, before Christians and toilet paper companies told us that we shouldn't. It's *dirty*.

What's wrong with shit? Lots of people love it. Scat movies? There are hundreds of 'em. Get off your feminist horse, it's not all, or even mostly, guys taking dumps on gals. It's more.

Sometimes it's just girls shitting—in close-up. A perfectly round anal daisy. Just puckering in the middle, like someone begging for a kiss. Uhh. Uhhh. Uhhhhh! The pucker puckers further. A tiny black mass appears at the center, then disappears like a whack-a-mole mole. Uhhhh! It reappears and stays, growing into a tiny turd. The brown pucker opens. A golf-ball sized fecum slips from that anal love-hive into the waiting mouth below. Then another, thin and long, like a brown snake, covering the male face underneath.

There's no smell in a video. I'm not animal enough to stand it in reality. Video gives me distance. It lets me enjoy the dirt without the consequences.

Now they're smutzing the shit around. Those two. Over their naked bodies. Kissing, passing a turd between their mouths. Now they're fucking. Screwing on a fecal bed. Sliding on the brown muck as they rise and fall. My orgasm precedes theirs by at least a minute.

Shitty? Why is that *bad*? Think about life, the earth. Think about how shit mixes with dirt to allow plants to grow, to allow animals to eat them, to allow those animals to grow and be eaten by other animals, who are then eaten by us. All life exists because of shit and dirt. How could there be anything wrong with that?

Yeah, I'll clean my nails if it means getting laid, but I'd much rather meet someone who enjoys a romp in the mud. See you on the bulletin board at scat.com.

ENDNOTES: [Visitors to my website: mykelboard.com or subscribers (email to: god@mykelboard.com) will receive a few extra endnotes. There are just too many to keep up with.]

—>*Scalia to new heights dept:* Scott Ritter sent me an e-clipping from England's *Guardian* newspaper. It was about evil Supreme Court Justice Scalia and a recent talk he gave at Harvard. According to that paper:

Challenged about his views on sexual morality, Justice Scalia surprised his audience at Harvard University, telling them: "I even take the position that sexual orgies eliminate social tensions and ought to be encouraged."

This statement is even odder since Scalia opposes "sodomy," abortion, and birth control. That being the case, the results of his orgies are gonna create a lot more bundles of social tension than they'll relieve.

—>*Maybe they fear doing it with Scalia dept:* Ted sent me this one, from CNN of all places.

Anthony Bogaert, a psychologist and human sexuality expert in Ontario just published the results of a new study. His research says about one percent of adults have, "Absolutely no interest in sex and that distinction is becoming one of pride among many asexuals."

Actually, I think that the reason is Prozac and its cousins. These castrating mood substances are the new whores. Pay your money. Fix your sex problems.

Me? I'd rather go to Thailand.

—>*If that's the DA, I could live in San Francisco dept:* San Francisco police raided a lap-dancing club and busted some dancers and the club owner. Nothing new there.

They handed the cases to District Attorney, Kamala Harris, for prosecution. Nothing new there either.

But, Harris told the cops to go fuck themselves. Not exactly, but she did say she would not prosecute.

"Prostitution and regulatory violations at the clubs raise complex issues involving worker safety, exploitation of women, equity, and fair notice," she said.

She also said, her primary concern about the lap-dancing theaters is the safety of the women who work there, not the sexual nature of their work. She intends to "prioritize murders, rapes, and narcotics crimes higher than whether people are paying for consensual sex in the theaters' private booths."

This makes so much sense it's positively un-American!

[This info comes from David Steinberg's great "Comes Naturally" column. You can subscribe for free with an email to eronat@aol.com.]

—>*Speaking of AOL dept* Why do cool people like David stay there? AOL's newest TV commercial brags that they have a program where parents (or anyone else who sets up the system) can monitor every site visited, every email message sent or received. They can get a complete printout of every last internet activity of anyone who uses the computer. That's sure gonna encourage those web-dating hubbies to fly with AOL, yeah.

—>*You can't even be a reactionary these days dept:* In a previous column I wrote about those of us who switched to Vans because Nike bought the Converse company. After that column went out via email, Dolf wrote me that another megalopoly, the VF company, owns Vans. These are the same people who bought Eastpack, Wrangler, and Tommy Hilfinger.

Oy vey, what's a rebel to wear? Do they still make Keds?

—>*Unintentional irony(?) dept:* In reality don't bother with scat.com. The site is operated by a farm equipment company that makes, of all things, composting and odor-control equipment. Now tell me *that's* a coincidence.

—>*Jew of the Month Club:* This month's Jew is the famous Anarcho-Marxist who said: *If I can't dance you can keep your revolution.* Oh yeah, Emma Goldman. Fuck revolution, though. That's how I feel about the Democrats.

—>*Shorter than usual dept:* Yeah, even though this was a double column, it was less. I was curious about the election, but it was too close to the deadline to write about it. I won't say much now *except*, it cured me of a very specific illness.

My Mother Wears Combat Boots
Jessica Mills

Call this, if you will, an addendum to my "Punk Parents & Their Kids Go On Tour" three-way interview that appeared in issue #247. That was then and this is now, and I've added another notch to my belt of punkparent possibilities.

Then, my girl accompanied me on a week-long tour with my band, and I had it worked out so that she'd never have to be hanging out in a smoky or too-loud-for-her venue. Now, a year and a half later, I thought a weekend road trip would be do-able, just me and my girl, to meet up with the SUBHUMANS for the last shows of their tour. Then, just as now, it proved to be more than just do-able; it was fuck'n fun and I can hardly wait for next time!

I had excited butterflies in my stomach on the drive up. Maybe they were slightly anxious mom ones, but I was feeling like some giddy high school dork on her way to see her favorite band in mom and dad's borrowed car. Ah, some things never change. But some other things obviously had. Instead of smoking and drinking beer with my high school friends, I was doling out healthy snacks and singing along with my girl to her favorite preschool pop tape.

When I eventually switched the tape to the SUBHUMANS, she demanded a swift end to it. Ugh oh, the first sign that things weren't gonna go so well.

I reminded her that if she didn't want to be inside where the music was going to be playing, we could hang out outside, no problem. She said she was sure she wanted to stay inside even if it was loud and smoky.

Wh-wh-what? Smoky?

Damn! I had completely forgotten to ask if there was smoking allowed inside these venues, but my girl sure didn't forget that mantra-excuse I give her if/when she can't go to a show with me. Enter the unspoken mama-rationalization factor: It's too late to turn back now; two nights of being around some smoke aren't going to ruin her lungs.

We arrived before the bands started playing and when they did, she cooperatively kept her earplugs in. She did ask a few times if she could take them out, so I reminded her that if she wanted to stay inside that she'd have to keep them in but if she wanted to take them out and go hang out outside with me instead, that'd be fine. She always chose to leave them in and stay inside.

At the end of that night's show, she did let a few of the SUBHUMANS know what she thought of their music, "Boring!" But the kid had a great time! The only young kid in the place, she had a captive adult audience who doted on her. She did not miss having a playmate her age at all.

A bartender hooked her up with Shirley Temples, Sprite loaded with cherries and cherry juice. Wicks took her out for pizza. Elaine brought her leftover Halloween candy. Karoline fed her vegan strawberry cake and gifted her a George W. Bush coloring book that she dove into while sitting atop the piles of shirts behind the merch table. (Enter mama-rationalization #2: Go with the special occasion; a night of unbridled sugar consumption won't stunt her growth.) She made new mama and papa punk friends. And she hugged Dick and asked him how he got so sweaty.

With the band heading to a bar and to an undecided upon hotel an indeterminable number of hours after that, I thought I'd have to get going to find a cheap, close-by hotel room of my own. Hell yeah for the punks who overheard me say I needed to go get a room for my kid and me and told me, "I know we just met, but if you're cool with it, you could crash at our place."

Hell yeah! With their spare key and their drunkenly backwards drawn map to their place, my girl and I made our way there. Just in time, too. My overtired yet still excited girl's fast-acting sugar crash had entered meltdown mode. To say she was really disappointed we weren't going to be staying in a hotel is an absolute understatement.

I should have remembered from the week-long tour with my band that she really took to staying in new-to-her environments, hotel or otherwise. (If I had remembered that in time, I wouldn't have resorted to persuading her to calm down with the promise of, "Since I won't be spending any money on a hotel, I can get you a new toy.") As soon as we got in the door, she was happy again, poking around the collectable toys and petting the kitty. We gathered a blanket and pillows and snuggled tight on the couch.

My girl woke up at a painfully early hour so we left before anyone else woke up. I had heard our hosts stumble in pretty late so I didn't think it would be courteous to stick around and wake them with cartoons and my girl's demands for breakfast. We drove the four hours home to where the SUBHUMANS would be playing that night and prepared for the show with a two-hour nap.

The show again was a helluva lotta fun and this time, Daddy 'Nesto got to come. My girl loosened up more than she had the previous night, venturing from behind the merch table, spastically dancing around the empty spaces, feeling more comfortable around old and new "grown up friends" who gave her more treats and attention. We did the "You copy me, then I copy you" dance she loves. Daddy 'Nesto bounced her around on his shoulders and played circle pit chase with her.

By the end of the night, she had her shoes off and was asking me if she could go "run around in the big circle" by herself. I told her, "No, I don't want you to get squished." She innocently protested, "But tonight I want to get sweaty dancing like Dick. Pleeeaasseee, I'm not sweaty yet, feel me!"

Though she didn't get to enter circle pit world unaccompanied, she was pretty thrilled by the big sleepover at our place after the show. I couldn't believe she was still awake when she was! (Enter mama-rationalization factor #3: So what if she's still up at 1AM on a school night; she'll have to play hooky tomorrow which means I get to sleep in, too!)

There was only one way to end this weekend even more perfectly than it had been already—Karoline and I headed out on foot to the closest bar and left the punkparenting to Daddy 'Nesto and crew at home.

Punkparents, get in touch. P.O. Box 220331 / Hollywood, FL 33020. Or email – yardwidewideyarns@hotmail.com

How interesting, Democrats watching the election results at a high-rise hotel in midtown Manhattan commented, that the rest of America thinks it understands terrorism better than we do. New York bore the brunt of 9/11, yet CNN's exit poll found that New Yorkers considered Iraq a bigger issue than terrorism when casting their votes for president. Midwesterners and southerners felt the opposite, motivated by fear of the unknown—literally, as they are neither likely targets of terrorism, nor did they feel or smell the horrors of that terrible day. Ranking terrorism their number one concern, they nevertheless supported an incumbent for whom the war on terrorism is nothing more than a marketing

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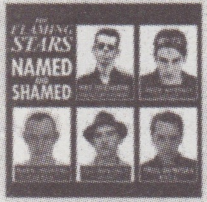
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slogan.

Such astonishing gall! Only women are affected by the abortion debate; only women ought to be allowed to vote on it. The same goes for war—only the young who fight and die in war enjoy the moral right to declare it. Terrorism? Please, if you live in Mississippi or Colorado or Alaska, don't presume to talk about, much less cast your vote based upon, your "views" of Islamist terrorism. New Yorkers don't lecture you about hunting. Butt out of our business. Or at least have the grace to follow the lead of New York City voters if, contrary to history or logic, terrorism is your number one concern.

"Some New Yorkers, reported the *New York Times*, said they didn't even know any people who had voted for President Bush. (In both Manhattan and the Bronx, Mr. Bush received 16.7 percent of the vote.)"

A few minutes before midnight, a young woman took the microphone where Hillary Clinton, who hilariously believes she has a date with presidential destiny, had tried to pump up the crowd. "Of course they send me up here to deliver bad news," she began. Ohio was still in play, but the Democratic Party had rented the ballroom and its big projection televisions for only a few hours. Disenfranchised and disinvited, Kerry Victory Party attendees aimlessly scattered along East 42nd Street in search of alcohol and cable news coverage. Kicked out into the cold. It was a grand night for metaphor.

The morning after, life went on.

It was disgusting.

Guided by a list of chores, I made my way through the subway station at Times Square and came across a man with silver skin, standing perfectly still, who entertained a crowd by doing nothing. People stared at him, fascinated, smiling. A few clapped. How dare they stand there and grin? Days after the British medical journal *The Lancet* had published a study showing that American taxpayers had financed the bombs that murdered more than 100,000 innocent Iraqis in just one year, the morning after a majority of their fellow citizens re-hired the butchers who ordered the genocide, how dare they enjoy their lives? More approving smiles, more applause. The guy still hadn't made a move. Oddly, that was the point. Someday the silver guy will become president.

I found a quiet spot and fired up my laptop. Many people have wireless connections in Manhattan. Not all of them are password-protected. I skimmed e-mail from gloating scum.

"I drive by the Manzanar Internment Camp Memorial when I go to Mammoth in the Sierras," wrote Jim Agnew (jagnew3@cox.net). "I hope to see you behind the gates in shackles when drive up to ski in Mammoth this winter."

In any other country, people would take to the streets.

A dictator had put himself up for "reelection" and declared war on gays and pregnant teenagers. An administration whose principals built concentration camps, lied us into two wars, and fleeced the treasury to further enrich themselves and their campaign contributors is getting four more years rather than the forty to life they deserve. Florida 2000 became Ohio 2004, complete with its own Katherine Harris, discarded voter registrations, and Jim Crow-style assaults on blacks. Most of all, the whole thing stunk.

"Successive waves of the national exit poll in the afternoon and evening reported that Kerry had a two or three-percentage point lead over Bush nationally and in several key states, including Ohio," wrote the *Washington Post*. On ABC, Charles Gibson said: "The exit polls got it flat wrong."

If so, that would be a first. That's what they said back in 2000, when exit pollsters called Florida for Gore. We later learned that Gore had won Florida, by at least several thousand votes. The exit polls were right last time. This year, I trust them more than Ohio's Secretary of State.

The day after a shady election handed to a maniacal buffoon, New Yorkers, whose dead remain scandalously un-avenged, were in the streets. Civil strife, rage, the fight for decency and democracy—they were nowhere to be found.

People looked up at the sky, taking in the sun on a crisp fall day. They streamed in and out of the Disney store. They lived their lives. I lived mine. Half a world away, meanwhile, AC-130 planes and tanks bought by American citizens and dispatched on the orders of criminal goons busily declaring themselves a mandate dropped bombs and shot shells into a city called Fallujah. "Marine Expeditionary Forces will continue to conduct operations and will not cease until Fallujah is free of foreign terrorists and insurgents," read an official military statement. Issam Mohammad, spokesman for the Fallujah hospital, said that a woman was "badly wounded." A young girl lost her leg.

How dare they? How dare I?

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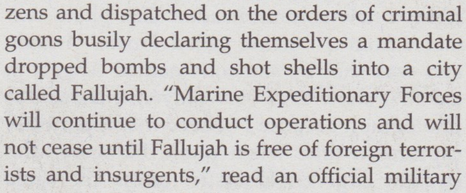
NEW BOOKS: *Wake Up, You're Liberal!: How We Can Take America Back From The Right* (Soft Skull Press, 336 pp., price $14.95), is out now, available everywhere. *Generalissimo El Busho: Essays And Cartoons On The Bush Years* (NBM Publishing, 208 pp., $19.95 hardback/$15.95 paperback) is also out. I'll be speaking and signing both books at stores across the United States during October; check my Rallblog at www.rall.com for details.



Please help us, Dr. Who!

I'm really trying to resist writing about the obvious this month, since almost all other columnists will be writing about the recent election in which America shit democracy and broken glass all over our collective faces. But every time I start typing, the same image of a river of reeking gore flowing forth from the doors of the White House pops into my head. It's fucking gross, and there are spiders in it. And even though spiders may help eliminate insect problems, they themselves are insect-like and super-creepy.

Anyhow, for once in my life I really don't have much to say. Mostly because I keep thinking about the above-mentioned river and spiders; every time I open my mouth, a little bit of vomit comes up. I didn't know what else to do on November 2nd besides shave my head and listen to GOB "The Kill Yourself Commandment" very loudly and repeatedly. Occasionally and randomly, I would grab my bald head and ask, "What kind of fuckery is this?" Indeed, what kind of fuckery is this?

I don't think I need to describe how terrifying it is to think of another four years with that Hee Haw cast member as our president. And I don't necessarily feel much more animosity towards Ohio than I did prior to this election. Basically, I know we were fucked before this, and even if The Great Fat Wreck Hope John Kerry won the election, we would still be fucked. But why was I so utterly and completely dejected the morning of November 3rd? What is so different about this time around, as opposed to the much more insidious way Bush "won" the 2000 election? Well, since I am writing about the obvious, I might as well state the obvious: he didn't have to steal this election.

As I watched the TV and checked the internet for updates, the entire Midwest and South began to turn a bright red. I was hoping this meant that these colored states were burning. I hoped that every single asshole with a "Support Our Troops" yellow ribbon used it as a noose, and set themselves ablaze while choking on their own blind faith. I dreamt that the red signified lava, and that every motherfucker who believes that there should be a law against gay marriage was being digested in the bowels of molten earth. I closed my eyes and wished that the red symbolized massive hemorrhaging in the anuses of all who say, "It's a child, not a choice."

But no. The red meant that this election was no longer about our economy lying flat on its face. This election was no longer about all those sent to die in Iraq. This election was no longer about all the children left behind by bullshit domestic policies. Like many have and will point out, this election was not a disagreement over what America is doing; it was an election over what America *is*.

And for the first few hours all, I could say was, "We're fucked." Now all I can say is "yep" with a terrified sense of hilarity. The joke is on us. As a nation, we deserve the next four years.

I tend to think of presidential elections in much the same way I think of that disgusting fluoride treatment they give you at the dentist. The friendly dentist gives you many flavors to choose from. Bubble gum, orange, grape, strawberry, sharkleberry fin, you name it. But they all taste like absolute shit. But at least we could have had a new flavor. A flavor that looks eerily like Dr. Hill from the movie *Re-Animator*. That would have been awesome – four years of Re-Animator jokes! What kind of world deprives me of this? A cruel world where assholes are not engulfed by lava or suffer massive anal hemorrhaging.

I'm not going to waste the precious energy in my hands that could be used to assault my own genitalia telling you how bad Bush is and exactly how fucked we (everyone in the world) are. Quite frankly, I think we should all make an effort to step outside of our community and try to convince our neighbors that war has killed more people than abortion ever has or will. Don't isolate yourself in our little circle of friends, because then we're simply political Yes-Men. Watch Fox News. Watch CNN. Read Bill O'Reilly's book. Fuck a Republican. "Know your enemy" or some tired bullshit like that.

A lot of people are talking about moving out of the country, and I can't say I blame them. I've thought about it. The other day, a fellow student in khaki pants told me to love it or leave it. I told him I'm going to hell and that I will see him there.

Anyhow, this past election pretty much galvanized my resolve to never vote again. As I see it, the only two reliable presidential candidates are a bottle of Jim Beam and the front end of a shotgun. I've chosen the Jim Beam, but I have a feeling I still lose.

Endnotes:

1) I'm sorry if this month's column wasn't very funny. Rest assured, I had started writing a Heroic Ballad about power violence, but that was even less funny.

2) Go see your dentist often. If you are going to start fucking republicans, no one is going to want to kiss you with that lizard-mouth.

3) FUNERAL SHOCK has a new 12" out, and it's easily the best stuff they've done. I love their first 7", but this thing blows it out of the water. They've really grown into their sound, and are officially one of my favorite bands going nowadays. Pick it up if you aren't an asshole or something.

4) SEE YOU IN HELL have a new LP out on Insane Society and Ultima Ratio. If you liked their 7" and their splits, you will like this even more. Awesome recording, awesome band. If you haven't heard them, they play crushing hardcore/punk/thrash. Since November 2nd retarded my brain, a description is failing me. But they've figured out how to get SODOM's guitar tone. Which is cool.

5) As always, you can send essays on Victorian literature and e-spiders to me at: gregory.mantooth@gmail.com

MORE THAN
FASHION
CARL
CORDOVA

Election 2004

Dear Ohio,

I spent 7 years of my youth in your warm bosom, so I believe I can speak candidly when I say: Fuck you. This is not a slight to all your great residents that I have met in the past, or will meet in the future. And I cannot forget that it was your cruel intolerance and backwoods mentality that drove me to a life of punk and hardcore. To that I am forever grateful. Some of my greatest lyrics were penned about my experiences within your borders (see: "Jailbreak"). But that doesn't stop me from praising every second of my life since I escaped the despotic hell-hole that you so cleverly disguise as "The Heart of it All".

Sincerely,
Carl Cordova

New Header

Notice something different this month? That's right, a new column header. This photo was taken from a fanzine called *Frontal Assault,* and was shot by someone named Angela at the first show DYS ever played. I chose this photograph because I believe that it perfectly captures a time when punk, hardcore, and straight edge could all fit under the same umbrella. I know those days are long gone, but it puts a smile on my face regardless. "More than the X's on my hand, more than being in a straight edge band. I see no good in my mind getting fucked, a needless vacuum, and I won't be sucked." Hell yeah.

Al Quint Joins the *MRR* Posse

Al Quint is not just a man. He is the human equivalent of old school. This man got to see MINOR THREAT for the love of fucking god, and is still around to brag about it. His seminal hardcore fanzine, *Suburban Voice,* has spanned twenty years of punk and hardcore. I am not sure how he does it, but he is still very much a fan of today's respective hardcore and punk scenes, and has impeccable taste in what makes good music. So pay attention. To paraphrase a quote from a Ben Stiller movie "Listen to your friend Al Quint, he's a cool dude."

It's No Longer Our Turn

It is with great regret that I announce that my band, OUR TURN, is officially calling it quits. Our drummer is involved in three other bands, goes to school, and lives an hour and a half away in Sacramento. He could no longer make the time commitment. This was bound to happen, and I am surprised that it didn't happen a lot sooner. We thought of looking for a new drummer, but it just wouldn't be the same. We are going to do one more winter tour throughout the Southwest in the beginning of January. We are excited to finally be able to finally play places like Texas and Arizona. We should be playing an official last show a few weeks after the tour. I am not sure what the rest of the band members are going to do, but I was thinking about starting work on a zine with my friend Todd. Thank you to everyone who helped us out or supported us in any way. Stay on point.

Top Ten of January

FEEDERZ—*Ever Feeling Like Killing Your Boss?*
THE LEWD—*American Wino* LP
ATARI—*Ten Years Strong: Discography* CD (the liner notes alone make this worth picking up)
YOUTH BRIGADE—*Sound and Fury* LP (original 82 recording)
DIRECT CONTROL—*Religious Rampage* EP
SONS OF ISHMAEL—"Hayseed Hardcore" EP
SICK OF IT ALL–*Outtakes for the Outcast* CD (includes "Just Look Around" HOUSE OF PAIN Remix)
ROACH MOTEL—*What the Hell, its…*EP (take his life, please)
SWIZ—all
THE GEEKS—*From the Start* CD (Ki Seok, you can do no wrong)

RaNSoM
NoTE$
by Erika Ransom

European Tour. (Part I)

Whiskey.

I am ending tour exactly the way it started. Sitting at my desk late at night, listening to the sound of clack-clack-clack of my fingers on keyboard, writing my column for *MRR*. Except last month, I was drinking Jim Beam with a splash of cola, trying to calm my nerves. I hadn't slept well in days, tense about leaving for Europe and trying to get all the last-minute things done before I left. Granted, I was excited as hell, and had been looking forward to the trip for a long time. I knew it was going to be great. But energy is a strange thing, and my body was tense from the waiting. Once or twice, I had to remember to breathe.

On the last day before we left, I woke up at about 8am and just lay in bed for a couple of hours, listening to the sounds of birds and the morning traffic and thinking. I went to work, and didn't get out until thirteen hours later, finishing projects that had to get done before I left. Fucking shit! I was pissed. At about midnight, I came home to empty kitchen cabinets and my things all packed and ready to go. I was hungry, tired, frazzled. My eyes hurt.

Late at night, trying to write for a few hours, I was a wreck, thinking about rape, thinking about what happened in Philly. Letting all of those terrible emotions that come with personal recollection run through me. I wrote until the sun came up, and I knew that I had to go to bed. It was the first day of tour.

Before I go any further, take heed. This story, about my band THE PROFIT$ on our European tour in October 2004, is not a scene report. It is missing important details and simple facts, and contains no helpful contact information. My notes were lost early on, and after that I decided to ignore my journalist's head and just live without worrying about writing it all down. It was good to be in the moment. So, this column includes only my thoughts on the experience, and it may not even make sense. Now you've been warned, and the names have not been changed! Before I continue, thanks to everyone who made the shows possible and took such good care of us. Tour was an amazing experience I'll never forget. Onwards!

18 Hours.

This was our first European tour, so we didn't know what to expect in the way of borders. We didn't know what to expect at all.

We left Boston in the late afternoon. It was raining as we ran our gear across the asphalt to John's van. We brought our guitars, and I brought the heavy wood and metal box that houses my guitar head. I couldn't imagine leaving my amp behind, even on such a far trip. I don't attach myself to material things, but if I did, this machine of tubes and chrome is my dearest possession. It is the electric sound of my rage!

From Logan we flew to Detroit. It was odd, carrying my guitar, standing on the moving walkway, being carried by a machine through the Detroit airport to our gate. Everything was clean, well lit, with all glass and white walls. The only time I've ever been in Detroit has been on tour a couple of years ago, driving into the heart of the city. The juxtaposition was overwhelming. My memory of Detroit, of the real city downtown, is of long city blocks filled with boarded up buildings. A ghost town of misery and poverty bitterly divided by race and class. Detroit punks told us stories like going to a party and seeing brain matter drying on the wall, human remains from a previous tenant who met a shotgun blast. Indeed, the Detroit I saw was an urban battlefield.

Back at the polished airport, people sat in comfortable chairs and watched television before catching planes.

We found the one bar that allowed smoking. I ordered a whiskey and coke, and tried to relax. With no sleep for days, things were a bit surreal. After months of planning, we were on our way!

Three planes and two punk vans, through Boston to Detroit then Amsterdam, with baggage carts, finding gates, layovers, security, airline peanuts and strange desserts, we finally arrived in Bremen, Germany. The trip, in total, took eighteen hours.

Coffee.

We picked up our baggage and found ourselves in the airport lobby, greeted by a punk covered in patches waiting for us—it was Stivie! Hello! But we were a little confused. Where was customs? And the terrible border guards? Did we miss it? Nope, that was it. Being from Boston, we had heard so many horror stories of bands being turned away at the US/Canadian border, so we were quite surprised our crossing was so easy. We were lucky! Another surprise came when Stivie lit his smoke inside. I thought he was just being a punk. Nope. In Europe everyone can—and does—smoke everywhere.

It was late afternoon in Bremen, and cloudy, with the same gray sky we left in Boston. In their tiny, tiny kitchen that barely had room for the table, much less the people crowded around it, Stivie and his great housemates Kauczuk and Lotti made us feel very welcome with lots of good vegan food, bread with strange spreads, strong coffee, too many rolled cigarettes, and kick ass punk mix tapes. The sixth person, and their little refrigerator, had to sit in the hallway!

One of the first things I noticed was that only being able to speak English wasn't a problem, which I had been worried about. I kept joking that the Germans' English was better than ours! Perhaps because speaking a second language takes mental energy, it is slower going, and makes you think more about what you're going to say and your word choice. The pace and thoughtfulness made for good conversations, about life, punk, experiences, and traveling. I became more aware of my lazy mouth and vocabulary and slang, and gained a deeper respect for people who speak two (or more) languages. (Ah, time to brush up on my poor Spanish! Es muy mal…)

That night after the long journey, when even the strong coffee and the excitement couldn't keep me up anymore, it was so nice to climb up the ladder to the finished attic of their little house and lay in my sleeping bag and listen to the rain, so far from home.

Food, Beer and Cigarettes.

Our first show was on Friday, October 1 in Bremen at an amazing youth center downtown. I was told the graffiti-covered building had hosted DIY punk shows for the past ten years, and it was easy to believe given the posters and stickers that covered every inch of the place. We arrived early, and the show collective made an amazing dinner for the bands and volunteers—we are talking better than mom's cooking! No mystery stew in a plastic bucket here. There was a large buffet of vegan delights like falafel, salad, veggies, and other goodies. These punks knew how to cook! In addition to the food, there was a small bar downstairs in the concert room and the bands were given free beer and water. I was impressed both by the generosity, and the collective work that made it happen, qualities that seemed to be the norm throughout our experiences with the European DIY scene.

Besides the great food, another difference I noticed was that though the show was all-ages, there was a bar as well. Between bands, punks hung out and even drank beers in the middle of the street outside the youth center. A voice yelled inside of me, "Get off the street! Hide the beers! Respect the space!" But of course this was no big deal. To give you an idea of how normal this scene was, and how strange it was to me, below is a conversation I had with a German punk, describing many DIY shows in the US.

"For instance, at ABC No Rio in New York City, one of my favorite places on the east coast, you can't drink or smoke inside," I said, holding a beer.

"What do you mean? They don't have a bar?" asked the cool German punk woman with short blonde hair.

"Well, they don't have a bar, but you can't bring your own beer, either. Drinking in or around the building isn't allowed, at all," I said.

"Why not?" she asked, looking confused.

"The police would shut down the place and that would cause a lot of problems for the building, and would end shows there. And, you can't smoke inside. But I don't mind, it's actually nice without all the smoke."

Her eyes went wide as she looked at me, trying to comprehend. "What the fuck!!" she said as she lit up a cigarette and walked off. Wow! She thought I was crazy!

Sloma arrived with his van, the gear we were renting, and his friend Hubert, who was going to go on tour with us. They had just finished a long journey as well, as they drove straight from the middle of Poland to meet us at the show. The first thing they said to us was to demand, "Why aren't you playing shows in Poland?!" With this attitude, we immediately made them honorary Bostonians!

The show itself was full of energy, and the perfect way to start tour. The punks up front danced, which made us feel at home and so happy to be there, and everyone was very supportive. I felt a little strange before my songs, using English for my usual rants and explanations on stage. But, I hoped people got the gist of what I was trying to get across, and I think they did. Zerstört die Propagandamaschinerie!

Once again, I hit my word limit, so I have to end here, just when I was getting started. It has been strange coming back home, and my head is not quite all back yet. As usual, I am writing this too late at night, with too many things on my mind. To be continued until next month! Love and Cheers, Erika

Ransom End Notes

With the recent election, things are bleak right now. My past columns about state propaganda, the Bush administration, the Iraq war, and so on are still valid. You can go back and read them and not much has changed. So, for the next couple of months I'm going to write about being in Europe. It's the best thing I can do! But to keep things current, I've invoked the *MRR* columnist's sacred right of ENDNOTES. This first set is dedicated to Wells Anarchy!

Fuck Bush, all the Republicans, all the Democrats, anyone who is closed-minded enough to believe the superficial tripe about "traditional family values" and who voted to "protect the sanctity of marriage between a man a woman" in the constitution of eleven states. *Fuck you*. My anger is only rising.

Hello to Erik Sandberg, reading *MRR* (and not buying it, hey, watch the merchandise buddy!) in a record store in San Francisco right now. Cheers!

"We are the champions, my friends…" The cable access show I worked on for the DNC recently won top awards in *three* categories at the Northeast Regional Video competition for the Alliance for Community Media, the organizing body for cable access stations across the country. Yes, I am a cable access diva!

After eighteen episodes, *Roach Motel* has gone on hiatus. I've decided to continue to focus on DIY punk music, collective venues, and activism but with more of a documentary style format. Projects will take longer to create, but will be more in-depth and polished, and another way to help document our scene and people's organizing efforts. In addition to cable access, I plan for the new projects to be distributed on DVD. So watch for that!

THE PROFIT$ *'99-'04*, featuring all of our previous releases, is now out on Active Distribution. It only took us nine months to get all the music and art together! I'm really proud of the way it came out. Thanks one more time to Jon, Marta and crew! (www.theprofits.org)

Stay pissed.

ANONYMOUS BOY

Anonymous Boy: What a disaster! I don't think Bush voters really believed they were voting for Bush. They're thinking Bush is just the front, and that Cheney's in charge.

Steve S: Cheney's clearly a far more effective communicator than the President. That's a given. It doesn't necessarily follow that Cheney really is in charge. That's a little bit of chestnut, and I don't know how true it is. I've never been one of these people who believed Bush is an idiot. I don't think he's stupid at all. I think he's cunning.

AB: He *seems* like a stupid idiot.

Steve: No, he's inarticulate. It's not the same thing. There's a big difference. Can I give you an example from the Presidential debates? You may recall Kerry said something along the lines of—and I'm paraphrasing—invading Iraq the way we did basically helped Osama bin Laden recruit more followers to help him along in his mission. It allowed Bin Laden to say, *"see how America wants to dominate the Muslim world in a crusade against Islam."* Bush's response was "He would have Osama Bin Laden dictate the security of the United States." Do you remember that?

AB: Yeah.

Steve: That's logically fallacious. Right? That's not the proper conclusion to draw from what Kerry said. It's purely illogical. I actually think Bush *knows* it's illogical but he says it because he realizes there are many people who don't have the analytical skills, or who aren't paying enough attention to *realize* it's illogical. They instead embrace it and agree and nod their heads. That's a very powerful thing to say; *"he would turn over whatever's appropriate for the security of the United States to what Osama Bin Laden wants."* It's a preposterous and illogical conclusion to draw from what Kerry said, but if you're not paying attention or not being very analytical, it sounds right—*and terrible*—and you can *never* vote for somebody like that. I don't think Bush is dumb. I don't think he's incapable of drawing logical conclusions from a set of premises. I think he knew he was drawing a wrong conclusion, but he said it to be cunning. If he actually thinks he drew the proper conclusion from what Kerry said, that's even more worrisome.

AB: Well then, when Bush jumped all over Kerry's "Global Test," perhaps it was the same distortion. I'd thought he was just too ignorant to understand what Kerry really said. But you're saying he did understand but chose to intentionally misrepresent it anyhow.

Ron: I heard in Ohio, new Republican registrations were up 25% but new Democrat registrations were up 250%! That was ten times as many as Republicans. New Democrat registrations were seen around the country in any number of places, but most noticeably in what they called the "swing states." Also, the polls I've seen, I've heard they generally poll more Republicans than Democrats.

Steve: It's their attempt to emulate what they think would really happen on an Election Day in regards to who would really go to vote.

Ron: I knew there'd be a big turnout, but bigger turnouts are supposed to favor "us," so to speak. The hardcore people on either side always turn up but I thought in any election, a Democrat could've won if all of the Democrats, or most of the Democrats, or most of the Democrat-leaning people had bothered to vote. I'd seen that from the time I was young and paid any attention to elections. A whole lot of people weren't counted in polls, especially young people, and they were fired up.

AB: But I've been reading in the punk underground that, Punkvoter, and Fat Mike notwithstanding, a lot of the punk rock underground voted for Ralph Nader.

Ron: Well sadly, or perhaps gladly in regards to Nader, the punk underground doesn't mean a lot of people. I think there's an awful lot of people who despise Bush. If even some of the Election 2000 Nader voters voted Democratic, Gore would've easily won the election without ever having a prolonged thing. Even less voted for Nader this time.

Steve: Nader took 97,000 votes in Florida in 2000. ninety seven thousand! The margin of victory was 538.

Ron: Well if you don't count the thirty thousand or so Florida votes thrown out, who all voted for Gore.

AB: I heard many voter registrations in Florida this time had a lot of people who didn't check the boxes for "Democrat" or "Republican" but somehow they got mysteriously checked "Republican" later. What's the purpose of that?

Steve: To try and give the illusion Republican registrations are up. It's the expectations game. Many people want to vote for who is going to win. If the conventional wisdom is strong that one candidate will win over the other, there's a small subset of people who'll vote for that candidate if they have no strong feelings one way or another. They do it just because they prefer to vote for the winner. So the expectations game is the more you can get out into the ether that your candidate is going to win, the better it is for you.

AB: *Really?*

Steve: I know. It seems preposterous, but it's true.

AB: What kind of psychotics vote for who they expect to win merely so they can say they voted for the winner?!

Ron: Everybody loves a winner.

Steve: Who has more supporters? The Yankees or The Mets?

AB: But that's because The Yankees are a better team.

Steve: Do people follow them *because* they're a better team, or simply because they win more often?

Ron: Both teams are from the same city.

AB: But the Mets have their loyal fans…

Ron: They do, and lots of them, and deservedly so. He's just trying to make the point that everyone loves a winner. In 1972 I was very active in the campaign for McGovern.

Steve: The Nixon campaign?

Ron: That Election but certainly not active in the Nixon campaign, I was for McGovern. I even saw him several times. We knew we were going to lose, but mentally, what we tried to tell ourselves was; "No. We can win." Even though we knew we'd lose. Then afterwards you wouldn't believe how many people I knew who flaunted in my face that McGovern lost, and how they bragged about voting for Nixon. I believe a whole lot of them voted for him simply because they thought he was going to win. A year and a half later when Watergate was going full steam ahead, you couldn't find *one* person who admitted they voted for Nixon, even though they all told me to my face that they did. But when he was scandalized, they denied they ever voted for him. I confronted each and every one of them. They all denied it, except for my Aunt Julie who is very honest. Even she tried to deny it at first, but I said, "Aunt Julie, you *told me* you voted for Nixon." She was the only one who admitted, "Yeah well, I guess I did, but it sure was a mistake." If someone looks like the winner they all rush out to vote for him, but if he turns out to be a loser, they all claim they didn't. Because, in America, people like winners.

AB: Kerry and Gore went down in exactly the same way. But do you think Kerry was a more intelligent man than Gore?

Steve: Than *Gore*? No. I think Kerry's more or equally intelligent. He ran a better campaign than Gore. Kerry's whole history is he's a good closer. His campaigns flounder but in the close he wraps it up and he wins. A very recent example was the primary. The day before Iowa people weren't even talking about Kerry except to say, "how could it have happened that John Kerry, with his resume and profile, is doing so badly?" Kerry didn't just win in Iowa, he destroyed them in Iowa, and then New Hampshire, and went on to win a decisive primary victory. That says a lot for his ability to come up from behind in the end. I don't know how he does it exactly. Maybe he recognizes that people who didn't decide a year ago would decide in the last two weeks so he channels his energy into figuring out how to effectively work those last couple of weeks. This is conjecture, I have no idea how he really does it. From what I heard, it was a repeating pattern with him. When he was challenged for the Senate he was far behind in polls and then again, he inched back up, demolished in the debates, and won handily. It wasn't close. That was one of the reasons why I wrongly predicted Kerry's win and it wasn't going to be close this time. Having made the prediction, I thought it was also possible that Bush would win and it wouldn't be close either.

Bush's repetition of themes clearly helped him. Using the same language repeatedly is clearly a valuable tool. Look at Bush with his "America and the world are safer." Right? If you just repeat a lie over and over again it does take hold. "Kerry the Flip Flopper" took hold. You must give him credit. He defined the terms of the debate. Kerry eroded the flip-flopper charge, but he couldn't demolish this false reputation of being a flip-flopper. Cheney, of course, does a much better job of articulating the so-called "inconsistencies" of Kerry's position on Iraq. He does it in a disingenuous way, but he does it effectively, particularly to somebody who's not paying close attention. What people who love Cheney love *about* Cheney is that he's such a serious, avuncular figure of comportment. He's someone "who you feel can take care of you," or some bullshit like that.

Ron: Darth Cheney.

Steve: *Nothing* Cheney says resonates with me. But for his base, he does a good job. For people in the middle? I don't think he does a good job. Sometimes his articulations are…like the way Cheney was asked the AIDS question—that was an eyeful! Did you see it? It was where he's supposed to show empathy and he cares. He said things like "Oh. I didn't know it was such a problem among African American females." It was something like that.

AB: He said it with a stone cold face and no emotion.

Steve: But Cheney was effective in showing inconsistencies in the Kerry record on Iraq. What I liked about Edwards was when he said, "You wanna talk about records Mr. Cheney? You voted against Head Start, you voted against 'Meals-on-Wheels for seniors, you voted against a resolution to free Nelson Mandela, you voted against the Martin Luther King Holiday." I mean clearly Edwards was prepared. You just don't pluck those things one after another out of thin air. He went through them so fast—he knew them all, and was ready.

Ron: Cheney claimed he never said there was a connection between Saddam Hussien and 9/11, but *Meet the Press* pulled out the videotape when he said it. And that Chris Mathews guy also had a tape and he said "It's right here, we have it all on tape. He really should know better than that. In fact he does know better than that, and he lied." He actually used the word "lied."

Steve: Chris Mathews. Have you seen his Sunday morning show? I watch it, not every week but pretty regularly. Otherwise I never really see him unless he's on some sort of *Today Show* doing commentary. He always seemed like someone who isn't a die-hard Republican. I mean he worked for Moynihan.

Ron: Steve! Moynihan was conservative.

Steve: He was conservative but essentially, just on some things.

Ron: Certainly on gay issues…I mean my god…

Steve: One thing about Chris Mathews I noticed in this election cycle is he really hated the whole Swift Boat Veterans for Truth thing.

AB: For all the good it did us for *him* to be outraged about it. No one paid attention to him. They all paid attention to Bush repeating he had "moral values" over and over again.

Steve: I can't even begin to express how depressed I feel about that. Well, obviously I don't know how to explain anything. I guess maybe Karl Rove was right after all—whip up people's feelings about so-called "moral values" and your hard-right supporters will flock to the polls. Those eleven state amendments to ban same-sex marriage and (in eight cases) civil unions or other benefits probably helped a lot, particularly in Ohio, where 22% of the people said in exit polls "moral values" was the most important issue to them, more than the percent who said "Iraq" or "terrorism." Fear is a powerful thing—make people afraid they'll be killed, or afraid their kids are in danger, or afraid some nefarious "other" is threatening their most cherished values, or afraid people who are smarter than they are—are looking down on them, or afraid their religion is disrespected and seen as ignorant—and they will do whatever you want them to, including voting in ways that are largely against their own interests.

AB: What? You believe that?

Steve: Or maybe that's not it at all. Maybe most people in this country really do think through the issues and they just end up on the very conservative side. Maybe they care little about the fortunes of people in most of the rest of the world, or they don't care about preserving the environment, or they think abortion should be prohibited, or they think gay people are a moral evil, or they think powerful people deserve to have dominion over the rest of society, or they don't think rich people have any obligation at all to contribute to the welfare of the disadvantaged, or they think large corporations should have a nearly unfettered ability to make money at any cost, or they think the country's laws should be reflective of their religious viewpoints, or they think minorities should remain in their place, or they think constitutional protections against civil liberties violations by an ever-more secretive government are not important. Maybe they think all of these things. And that leads them to support conservative Republicans, who think these things too. Maybe it's that simple. I sure as hell don't know. But I hate the idea that I live in a country where voters in eleven states overwhelmingly passed those amendments, including the unbelievably far-reaching one in Ohio with 62% support.

AB: They don't.

Steve: Obviously they do. Perhaps the best thing that can happen for the Democrat's long-term fortunes is for Bush to appoint several justices to the Supreme Court who then overturn Roe v. Wade. That might cause the so-called "security moms" and other social moderates to drop their alignment with the Republican Party. Of course, even then, it might not. Today I have a heavy heart, and fear what is becoming of our nation.

AB: Being depressed won't change anything. Action will. I don't believe most Americans are flipping out about gays and moral values. Bush manipulates you to think they do.

Steve: I'd like to believe that so many people don't hold those so-called moral views, but I feel there's just less and less reason for doing so. Over 59 million people *did* vote for Bush. No matter how you slice it, that's a huge number of people willing to support that agenda.

AB: Do you actually *believe* 59 million voted for Bush? Or were millions of votes uncounted and millions more switched because of malfunctioning machines in minority communities? They've stacked up in Ohio over 100, 000 punch cards in Democratic areas uncounted because of hanging and pregnant

chads. Defective machines made pregnant chads which couldn't be read. The broken machines are intentionally placed in urban minority districts. Some of the races in Ohio, when they opened the machines came back with vote counts reading negative 25 million votes cast! And voter fraud isn't just failing to count the Democrat's votes any longer; it's machines switching votes *from* Democrat *to* Republican. Florida and Ohio have no paper trail to check. It's intentional. When you cast a vote, how do you know it's being counted? And if it is, is it being counted for your candidate? Do you get a paper receipt? No. Even if you go to the ATM you get a receipt, but not if you vote.

Steve: ..hmm..

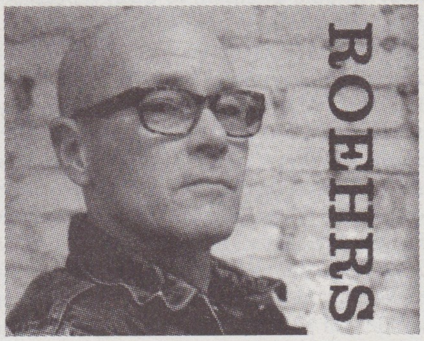
AB: And that's why I don't trust any claim that 59 million people voted for Bush. Have they given us any reason to trust them? They may eventually count the Absentee and Provisional Ballots, but they'll never count the punch cards spat out saying you didn't vote for president…and they *can't* recount the touch-screen computer voting machines because there's no way to check. So when the man on TV says: "There were no problems with the touch-screen computerized voting machines," ya gotta ask, "Did you personally check the hard drive?" Even in New Mexico they had massive spoilage of votes in Hispanic and Native American communities. They rigged the system everywhere. We gotta prove we were robbed, even with no verifiable audit paper trail. We do it by listening to guys like the chairman of the Mahoning County board of elections in Ohio, who said the numbers were so fucked, they *knew* the thing was rigged. Machines were going kooky all over the place in Democratic districts. Issues of calibration, static electricity, voters complaining they'd touch Kerry's name in bright blue, on the touch-screen but in the review, the name would come up in red saying, "You voted for George W. Bush, thank you." Other machines gave messages that said, "Your vote was not finalized." Other machines said, "Vote save error #9. Use back-up voting procedure." Machines had to be reset, others just froze, and they had to scrounge up provisional ballots…which of course they ran out of. The Board of Elections said they're gonna do an investigation to find out what happened. It's gotten to the point where people might have to bring a video camera into the voting booth to prove who they really voted for. You gotta look at blackboxvoting.org and check this shit out.

Steve: I'm not big on conspiracy theories.

AB: Steve, You heard the corporate media tell you 59 million people voted for Bush and a poll claim 80% of Americans feel legislating "moral values" has got to become the nation's most urgent priority. And you swallow it even though *you know* there's only six corporations that control all the media! These fucking corporations have business with a Republican controlled government. Why would you ever think they'd unseat the status quo and report these same Republicans perfected a sophisticated rigged one-party voting system? A system they were only partially effective in hiding in 2000. They've improved their theft techniques but they haven't perfected them…yet. C'mon. Common sense should tell you America isn't full of 59 million radical right wingers, all wringing their hands at the notion of gay-marriage in the face of a stinking economy, an endless war, a healthcare crisis, tons of missing explosives, and hostages being beheaded by terrorist maniacs. Yet that is exactly what they want and expect you to believe. But I don't believe we have a nation of nut-job right wing extremists, I think we have a country full of very clear-headed people. And they're getting fucking pissed! Fraud in Florida and Ohio is the true story. The Republican legislature in Florida fought a verifiable paper trail and won. In Ohio, they compromised, and agreed to the paper trail…*as long as it isn't put in place until 2006!* Why? You know it doesn't take a lot of technical wizardry to hook up a printer to a computer. Kerry gave up because he didn't have any options to retrieve the missing votes. The Republicans scammed him bad. They even had the balls to make it look like Bush won the popular vote too! Kerry knows it's a lie. Every campaign stop he made drew more people than Bush. Kerry fucking knows blacks in Ohio didn't endure standing in long lines all night, with Republican poll watchers questioning their registrations, saying they weren't registered, trying to disqualify them, with machines crashing, and polls running out of paper ballots, all to overwhelmingly vote for BUSH. I don't buy it for a red-hot second, Steve. You just heard Ron say there were ten times as many new Democrat registrations in Ohio than Republican registrations.

Steve: I hope you're right. Maybe we can go out to dinner or something soon and reflect on the state of our nation.

AB: If the next terror attack on NYC leaves us alive. We might be punished for the way New York voted. I'm afraid that's what Bush meant by, "I'll work to change the minds of those who voted for my opponent."



UP AGAINST THE WALL!

HELLSTOMPER from East Ridge, Tennessee has just celebrated ten years on the road with a triumphant headline appearance at the annual Confederacy of Scum Supershow, held this year in Austin, Texas. The show was marking the end of an era—HELLSTOMPER will always be remembered fondly! HELLSTOMPER delivered a hell of a goodbye set! Read this list of crowd pleasers: "Race is On"; "Meat Man"; "Are You From Dixie?"; "Hellbent For Dixie"; "Son of the South Medley"; "Up Against the Wall"; "Prison Tan"; "Haulin' Ass"; "Highway 61"; "Ass, Gas, or Grass"; "Movin"; "Just Another Day on the Road"; "Trouble"; "Get High Medley"; "Carolina Shine"; "If You Ain't From Georgia"; "Hellstomper"; "Talk Dirty" and "PBR."

To commemorate the passing of such a revered band, Steel Cage Records out of Philadelphia has issued a great farewell CD called *Fine...Forget It!* This 1994-2004 CD is packed with country-scum rock and roll. HELLSTOMPER start out with a scalding hot number, "Just Another Day On The Road." Shit! You know that HELLSTOMPER has lived through every experience that they describe in the words of these songs! HELLSTOMPER pounds through "Trouble," "Long Way Back to Louisiana," and when you get to "Alone" you find some heart-felt lyrics. Read the words:"Here I stand alone / Between hell and nowhere / On a two lane blacktop / That never seems to end / And if I ever get to where I'm going / Hell, I'm too damned a fool to know it / And I'll be up there on that highway / With my thumb stuck out again / Alone travelin down that dark highway / Gone—like a dream of yesterday / Alone—don't you place no bets on me / Cause gone is all I'll ever be / I had a girl who swore she love me / She was sweeter than a Georgia peach / Plucked fresh at picking time / But I left here there alone and cryin' / When I heard the Devil call my name / In a locomotives whine / I was born to roam and ramble / And when it comes my time / Lord, please let me travel on / I don't care in which direction / Cause hell is just a state of mind / And heavens just a song."

Fuck yes! HELLSTOMPER continues to pummel you through O.N.S. about a woman who betrayed her man, and "Mexas" about a hot love affair with a beautiful woman—"She took me to a graveyard and stood naked in the night / when I looked into her coal black eyes I saw the fires of hell burn bright". Yeah! HELLSTOMPER can really turn a phrase!

Next up is "Don't Sing My Songs" followed by "Double Barrel Blues." Next is a song that summarizes the bands' history. Read "Flyin' High and Nowhere Bound." "Well we started this band / Gonna hit the road and get some booze / Money and girls gonna get paid and gonna get laid and gonna take over the world / Well we raised a lotta hell / Even spent some nights in jail / Seen a whole lotta women on the road / But we never made a dime and I reckon that's fine / Cause buddy that's the way shit goes / And it's too late to turn back now / So give me three lines on the table / Four shots to wash that down / Maybe five and if I'm able I'll have me a six pack of cold iced beer / And when seven o'clock rolls I'll still be ten years on the road / Flyin high and nowhere bound / Well here we are now / Ten years later, got a few more things to say / Took a few detours made a few stops, picked up a lot of bad habits on the way / Seen highs and lows and seen band members go / Walking on around that bend / I've been beaten and broke, it ain't no joke / But I'd still do it all again". Yes!!

You HELLSTOMPER fans get "Baby's Outta Jail"; "4 AM. (Out of Beer, Drunk and Staring at Your Picture)"; "Liquored Up and Nasty"; and the grand finale, "Wastin' Time." Read some of the words to "Wastin' Time." "Spent nights in the arms of bottle nights in the arms of cocaine / Spent nights in the arms of so many women I can't remember their name / Spent time in the federal prison / I done time in the county jail / When I die I'm bound for heaven cause I served my time in jail / Wastin' time, / Everybody's got a rope and I'm at the end of mine / Wastin' my time yeah that's my biggest crime / Spent days working on the chain gang / Days workin' in the mill / Didn't get paid much for either one / But I damn sure got my fill / Been on the right end of a card game and the wrong end of a gun / Been on the rear end of a plow mule / Underneath that Georgia sun / Spent nights playing in them honky tonks with the lights shining in my eyes / Drinking 180 proof just like water and trying my best to die / Spent too many days a livin' and too many nights on the road / This big old wheel's spun too many times and it's time to rest my soul". Fuck yes!

This is a great CD! For your copy of HELLSTOMPER 1994-2004, *Fine...Forget It* write to Steel Cafe Records, PO Box 292474, Philadelphia, PA 19125; www.steelcagerecords.com.

Two other releases now available for you devout HELLSTOMPER fans. Number one is a HELLSTOMPER / SAVAGE CITY OUTLAWS split EP on Valentim Do Caralho Records, Hua Da Liberdade 241/Esq, 8400 Lagoa, Portugal. HELLSTOMPER begins the festivities with a "Move It On Down South Medley." This little ditty will make all you country punks smile!

On the flip side, the SAVAGE CITY OUTLAWS pour the gasoline on the burning southern rock – Portuguese style! SAVAGE CITY OUTLAWS make their opinions perfectly clear on their title track "Rap is Crap." The second song offered by the SAVAGE CITY OUTLAWS is "Mad Trucker." The wild, gruff singing and demented guitar playing help this record kick ass!

Contact HELLSTOMPER at www.hellstomper.8m.com and SAVAGE CITY OUTLAWS at sco@portugalmeail.com.

Casual Records, which brought you the fine DEAD KINGS record last month has a top notch HELLSTOMPER release for you. The two song seven inch starts off with a great HELLSTOMPER original "Trouble." Hear are the lyrics:"I was born on the top of Blind Dog Mountain bout 29 years ago / Spent the last ten years drinkin red-eye whiskey and layin' down the rock'n'roll / Got a few scars and a few tattoos / Got a black Les Paul and a mess of blues / Tell me little baby, what you gonna do cause now I'm headed straight for you / Comin' through on a bolt of lightening / Rollin' through like a hurricane / I was raised up by my grandpa / He was a backwoods bootleg man / He'd make a lotta homemade whiskey and he'd sell a little now and then / And I been on the road since I was just nineteen / Ain't too many things that I ain't seen / Ain't too many places that I ain't been / Now I'm headin' straight for you / Got the devil ridin' on my shoulder / We talk a little now and then / Got a Bible ridin' in my saddlebag right underneath a fifth of gin / I been schooled by the women, schooled by the road / I learned the hard way everything I know / And it sure gets cold when an ill wind blows and now it's heading straight for you."

The second song on this Casual Records HELLSTOMPER seven inch is a brilliant cover of Bruce Springsteen's "Open All Night." Fuckin' A! The Peach State meets the Garden State as Alan Goddamn King and Sweet Georgia Brown team up to hang a new set of testicles on that New Jersey rock n' roll gem!

For all you HELLSTOMPER product, write to the band at HELLSTOMPER, PO Box 9042, East Ridge, Tennessee 37412 For the "Trouble/Open All Night" single, contact Casual Records, c/o Franco Griesi, Via Falcone 13, 20010 Bareggio (MI) Italy; www.casualrecords.tk.

Alan Goddamn King (vocals), Matt Reynolds (drums), and Ben Crawford (bass) of HELLSTOMPER fame will continue to entertain rock and roll aficionados with Mr. Burnette on guitar playing under the moniker POLECAT BOOGIE REVIVAL. The first three songs "NYC Blues," "Danville Ground," and "Play It All Night Long" (Warren Zevon), are mighty good music! To contact POLECAT BOOGIE REVIVAL, write to Polecat Ministries, PO Box 9042, East Ridge, Tennessee 37412; polecatboogie@yahoo.com.

Also out on Steel Cage Records this month is a new CD by THE JABBERS, called *American Standard*. For those who are not familiar with THE JABBERS, these bad human beings were GG ALLIN'S band twenty years ago. This CD rocks like a motherfucker! THE JABBERS *American Standard CD* starts out with the rollicking "Sucker Punch," slams into "Vampire Girlfriend" and goes straight into "I'm A Mess." On song number four, "Cock Magnet," you get some vintage JABBERS rock'n'roll ! This is THE JABBERS' version of a love song—read on: "You just turned 21, looking so pretty / Living life hard in a west coast city / Turn the boy's head when you walk downtown / Waiting for some action when the sun goes down / You've got juicy red lips, jet black hair / Big blue eyes with a pretty vacant stare / Try to chase you but it leads me to a dead end / Everybody wants to be your boyfriend / I love you, baby, but I don't know what to do / "

We crash on through "Redneck Zombie" and arrive at THE STOOGES classic "Now I Wanna Be Your Dog," which THE JABBERS deliver in fine fashion. Wimpy Rutherford, the original singer from the earliest QUEERS lineup, kicks ass on this CD. What a great singer/frontman! Next THE JABBERS offer "Porno Stars and Muscle Cars." Song number eight is "Groovy Motherfucker" —this is raw punk rock the way it's supposed to be! Next up is "Gone Insane"—this one has some good lyrics. Check it out: "In the middle of the brightest light / In the middle of the darkest night / In the middle of the strangest dream / You know that things aren't quite what they seem / And you've gone, gone, / Quite insane—outta your brain / Quite insane—outta your brain / Start thinking of all you've missed / In a turmoil and you're gettin' pissed / Gettin' angry, you start to crack / Smash it up and start to attack "Excellent!

Next you get the old GG ALLIN song "Don't Talk To Me," one of the best scum-punk songs ever written! We run through "Motorpussy," "Cunt Sandwich," "Hang You High," "High On Drugs," and finish off with an amazing song, "Nuke Attack," with Mr. Jeff Clayton from ANTiSEEN on lead vocals! Fucking great! This is a first rate CD from Steel Cage! Get your JABBERS *American Standard* CD ASAP! Write to: PO Box 29247, Philadelphia, PA 19125; www.steelcagerecords.com.

Fuck yes! BROKEN from New Haven, Connecticut has more brutal product for you punks! Jim Martin (vocals), Gerry Stopper (guitar), Jason Gorman (guitar), Paul Oppel (bass) and Ken Cushen (drums), cooperate to make the rough and tumble punk rock of BROKEN. The deep gruff vocals of Mr. Martin push this shit over the top! If you like the sound of FUCKED UP from Canada, then you will like BROKEN—and these guys have been doing this for a hell of a long time! BROKEN always wears their politics on their shirtsleeves. Check out some of these lyrics to "Dead Weight." "Here we go around and around / An endless cycle with no end to be found / Always waiting for you to see / All the insane hypocrisy / A feeling that I can't get by at this time / Being slighted by a friend it's a crime / Your behavior is self-centered / You think your friends will tow the line? / How mistaken you will be when you're all alone / Here we go around and around / An endless cycle with no end to be found / Always waiting for you literally / You've proven to be dead weight."

BROKEN plows through "Rumor Mill," "It's For You," "The Regressed," and "Bad Decisions." Then you get a song that will ring true for a lot of people who have been persecuted for their appearance. Read the words to "Clown Suit": "I've been a thug in my past and I've paid for all my sins / That was then and this is now / I'm presumed guilty for my hard looks / You think I'm somebody that I'm not / A wall of hands taking me down / From Heathrow Security to the N.Y.P.D. / I.D. and take pictures of me, are you going to arrest me? / I know I'm clean and I'll be leaving soon / The ink under my skin reminds me of old times / So you think I did some kind of crime? / I'm presumed guilty for my hard looks / You think I'm somebody that I'm not / Do I fit your profile? / Am I in your database? / This is my fifth random security check today / I'm presumed guilty for my hard looks / You think I'm somebody I'm not." That's good shit!

BROKEN always cuts through the murky waters of politics with their incisive lyrics. Read the ideas in "The Greed." "Walking through their gauntlet to get ahead / Trying to live a dream that a corporation created / Comidifying the American dream, what a fuckin' lie / Breaking your back for a feudal system that still exists / More than you need / Expose the greed / Punish corporate thieves / Expose the greed / Buy into the corporation, your loyalty is mandatory / A hand shake and a pat on the back / How long until your nest heart attack? / All you hard work is squandered away / Because the CEO is an embezzler / He'll never be brought to justice / As long as the campaign funds keep rolling in." Excellent!

BROKEN include "Crime Scene / Message Board Hero"; "Suicide Watch"; "The Dover Test" and "Jaded" on this hard punk *Homeland Insecurity* CD. Also included is a hidden DEAD BOYS track at the end of the CD. For you copy of the *Homeland Insecurity* CD by BROKEN, write to Feralette Records, 6204 Hillsboro Rd, Nashville, TN 37215; www.feralette.com.

Until next month-

See you fucks at the bar!

LEFT IN RUINS
WITH GOLNAR

This issue is a pretty devastating one to read, if truth be told. Three separate tributes to now-gone fellow punks, rock'n'roll fanatics, independent media champions, and friends. The tangible difference in the feeling of copy editing or laying out these memorials as opposed to the regular fare of this magazine is, I imagine, similar to the differences you will feel in flipping through and reading them. The usual sense of the anything goes excitement associated with the heady abandon of punk rock is wholly tempered by these not-so-gentle reminders of loss. While it's true that rock'n'roll will never die, that doesn't mean that the circumstances of life and death won't force us to occasionally stop to catch our breath, and to take stock of the changes around us. I'd like to take this opportunity to express my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of Andrew "Stig" Sewell of the Icons of Filth, Greg Shaw of Bomp! Records and fanzine, and John Peel of Radio One, UK. All three of these men made profound and lasting contributions to the world of independent rock'n'roll, and the concurrent loss of their tireless efforts will be difficult to overcome.

Just a few days after learning of Greg Shaw's death, I pulled out the recently reissued *Best of Bomp!* LP and threw it on the turntable. It didn't make me feel so sad—Iggy and the Stooges, The Flamin' Groovies, and the Weirdos rarely do. It did, however, get me thinking about our rapidly aging youth culture, and about the implications of having already lost so many of those who blazed the trail. It's hard to resist the temptation to deify our heroes, but luckily this is punk rock, where there are "no gods making up our minds." No one will blame those of us who take some time to reflect, but let's not use the tragedy of death as an excuse for too much looking back or nostalgia. It's probably not an overstatement to say that the greatest continuing testament to the vitality of the work of those we have lost is that the rest of us are unyielding in our continued support of the music and ideals which they championed while they were alive.

***

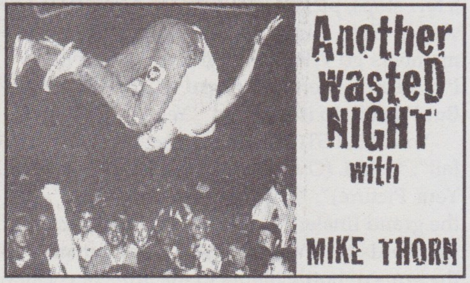
There is a piece of important news here at *Maximumrocknroll* headquarters. Our distribution coordinator, Clara Jeffers, is putting in her last few months of work with us. Clara has been heading up distro ever since *MRR* made the decision to leave Mordam; through her efforts, the magazine basically overhauled its entire distribution system, all in the name of DIY. Aside from her distro work, Clara has been absolutely integral to the functioning of *Maximumrocknroll* as a whole ever since she started here nearly three years ago, and has added to the magazine in more ways than I think most readers can imagine. Quite frankly, despite my abbreviated time working with Clara, it is as difficult to imagine working here without her as it is to imagine anyone taking her place.

As of this writing, we haven't selected a new distro coordinator, though we are in the process of picking from a crop of capable and exciting prospects. Stay tuned to these very pages for the announcement of whose to come—I'm sure they will be great.

***

It's true, I'm keeping it pretty short this month. In an effort to avoid an increasingly bleak reality, this column was going to be an elongated analogy linking baseball and punk rock. Unfortunately for me (and Red Sox fans) Mykel Board beat me to the punch by writing about the Yankees and Red Sox this month. Maybe I should wait, anyway—baseball season is over, but it's only two months until pitchers and catchers report.

As always, I encourage any and all of you to write to me at golnar@maximumrocknroll.com. After complaining last month that I've only received one letter since getting here, my inbox was literally deluged with mail, half of which I haven't even managed to respond to yet. I might as well take this space to answer some of this month's frequently asked questions: yes, I am a girl, no, Golnar is not my "punk name," and sure I'd like to meet you when you're in town, as long as you promise not to be too weird or creepy.



A line from an old CRISIS song "Town Hall" keeps running through my head: "…democracy's a baby aborted by the state…" I can't really sort out a specific reason why—though I have quite a few guesses.

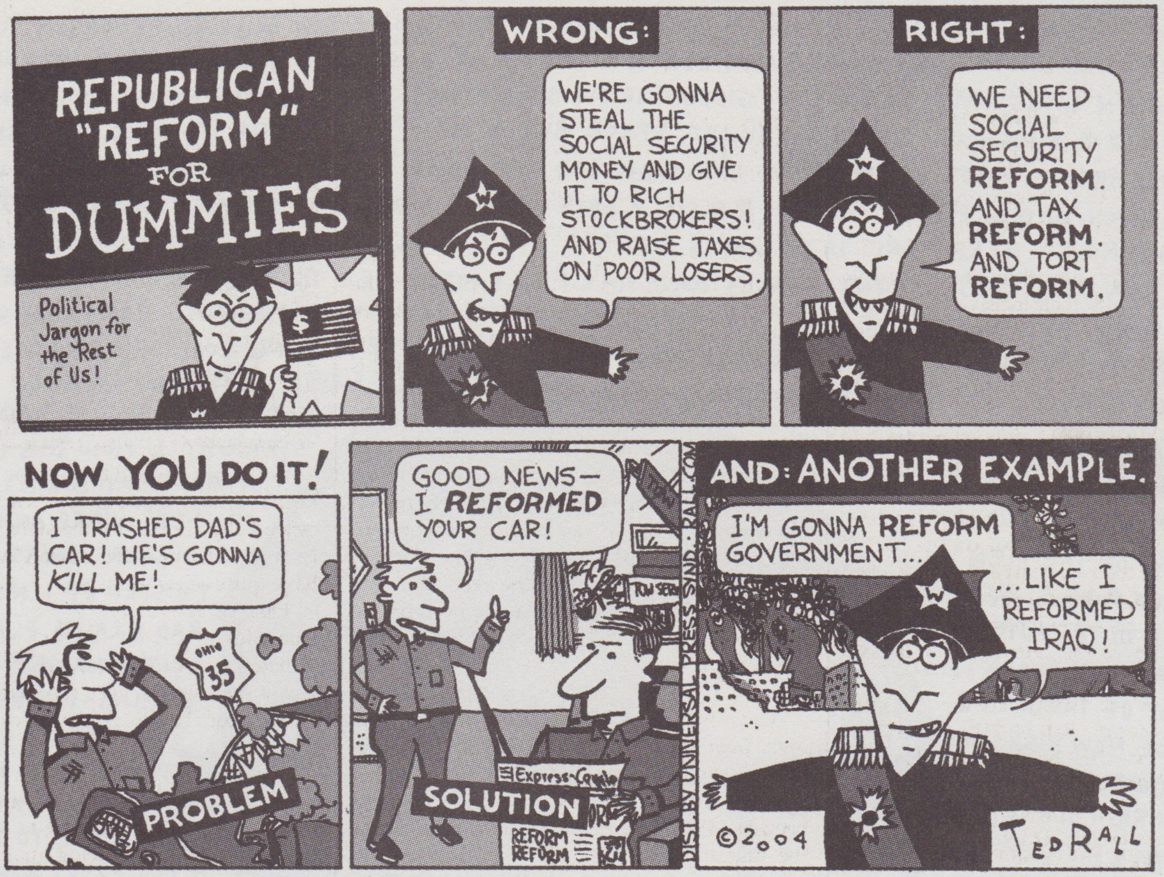
One of them goes by the name Alberto Gonzales—the man who would succeed Ashcroft as Attorney General. The man who was a one time lawyer for shadey mega-corp Halliburton, bankrupt energy company Enron, a primary architect of the Patriot Act, and who once refered to the the Geneva Conventions—which govern the rules of war and more specifically those rules pertaining to the handling of prisoners of war—as being quaint. Hmpf.

Another goes by the name Diebold and is often accompanied by the phrase "voter fraud." It makes one wonder when districts in Florida— which were predominately registered as Democrats—vote a hardline for the Republican ticket and story after story filters through about electronic voting machine malfunctions, computers locking up and the CEO of Diebold stating he is "committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the President." Double hmpf.

There's other reasons, I'm sure, for the previously mentioned line to be on repeat in my brain though I'm not so naive to find any of it suprising. Well, actually, I think I'm suprised at how overt the right wing is working toward their neo-conservative dream of a "New American Century." But isn't that how it always is? Look at Germany in 1932.

But enough of my fear mongering and "conspiracy" fueled babbling. On a lighter note, a couple official welcomes to our new(ish) columnists—one to Al Quint of the excellent *Suburban Voice* fanzine, another to Elliot Lange—who'll be taking over the reigns from where Rob Coons left off covering all that metal shit that I can't stand, and finally Greg Mantooth, who is trying his darndest to get his ass beat by the entire city of Philadelphia. Write them and tell them you care. As usual, write me and tell me I'm insane or offer me money for nothing:

mikethorn@maximumrocknroll.com


REPUBLICAN "REFORM" FOR DUMMIES
Political Jargon for the Rest of Us!
WRONG:
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RIGHT:
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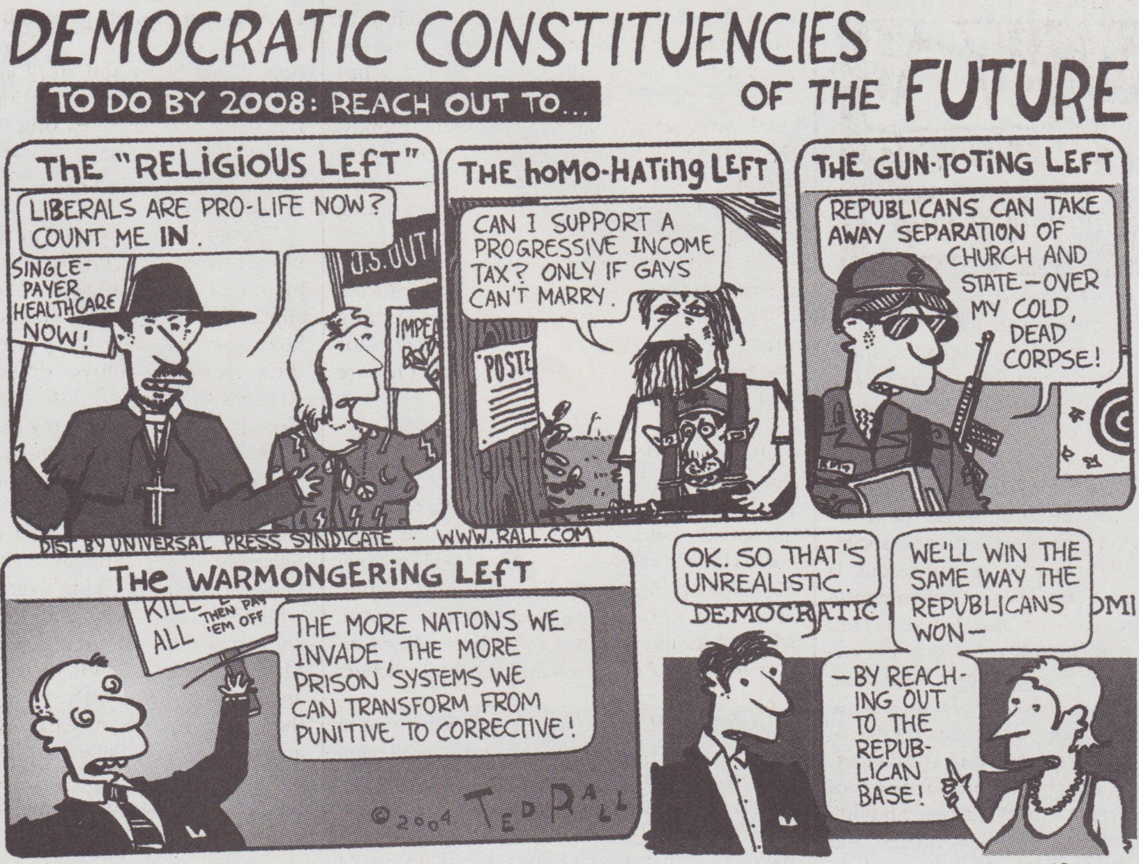
11-18-04-B


DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUENCIES OF THE FUTURE
TO DO BY 2008: REACH OUT TO...
THE "RELIGIOUS LEFT"
LIBERALS ARE PRO-LIFE NOW? COUNT ME IN.
SINGLE-PAYER HEALTHCARE NOW!
U.S. OUT
IMPEACH
THE HOMO-HATING LEFT
CAN I SUPPORT A PROGRESSIVE INCOME TAX? ONLY IF GAYS CAN'T MARRY.
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REPUBLICANS CAN TAKE AWAY SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE—OVER MY COLD, DEAD CORPSE!
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OK. SO THAT'S UNREALISTIC.
DEMOCRATIC
WE'LL WIN THE SAME WAY THE REPUBLICANS WON—
—BY REACHING OUT TO THE REPUBLICAN BASE!

11-18-04-A

I WAS BORN IN BULLET SPACE IN 1997 - BULLET SPACE IS A BIG BUILDING PROBABLY JUST LIKE OURS EXCEPT THE BRICKS ARE BLACK & I THINK IT HAS STUFF PAINTED ON IT - ITS WHERE GILLIAN LIVES WITH HER MOM - GILLIAN IS MY BIG SISTER - SHE'S ELEVEN GOING TO TWELVE - WE DID A BUNCH OF THINGS AT BULLET SPACE BUT SINCE I WAS LITTLE ITS KIND OF HARD TO REMEMBER - ABOUT WHEN I WAS ONE YEAR OLD WE CAME TO THIS BUILDING (209) IT WAS ME & MY DAD & MOM - GILLIAN & ALLIE & GRIF NEEDED A PLACE TO STAY SO THEY MOVED THERE & WE MOVED HERE - GRIF IS GILLIAN'S GOD DAD I THINK - ALL I KNOW IS THAT DONNIE IS BOTH OF OUR REAL DAD - I DON'T REALLY HAVE ANY FIRST MEMORIES THEYRE ALL JUST SCATTERED AROUND ALL THE WAY AT THE TOP - I THINK I MIGHT REMEMBER MEETING YOU PROBABLY HERE AT THE BUILDING - I LIKE HANGING OUT AT MY HOUSE & DOING COOL THINGS LIKE PLAYING VIDEO GAMES - I'VE BEEN TO DISNEYLAND - ITS AWESOME - I'VE BEEN THERE ONCE BUT I'VE BEEN WANTING TO GO AGAIN - I WENT ON THE MEN IN BLACK RIDE & ALSO THE BACK TO THE FUTURE RIDE ON MEN IN BLACK I SHOT A LOT OF TARGETS & MADE NEW HIGH SCORE I'M GOOD AT MAKING NEW HIGH SCORE (SOME OF YOUR PICTURES ARE STARTING TO CREEP ME OUT BUT I LIKE THEM ANYWAY) I LIKE TO HANG OUT IN MY UNDERWEAR LISTENING TO BAD BRAINS IN MY ROOM & HAVE A PARTY WITH EVERY ONE ↗☆

☆ - WHOSE IN THERE - I HELD MY BREATH ONCE FOR 15 HOURS STRAIGHT & I DID THIS (AIR GUITAR - HEAD BACK) & MY FEET WERE ON MY SHOULDERS I WAS ALL TWISTED UP - NOW BAD BRAINS PLAYS BY THE NAME SOUL BRAINS - MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD OF THEM - I IS U - THATS A JOKE - I WANT TO BE A POTIONIST SCIENTIST (I ALSO WANT TO BE A BUILDER SCIENTIST WHO BUILDS ROBOTS & CURES PEOPLE'S DISEASES & STUFF LIKE THAT

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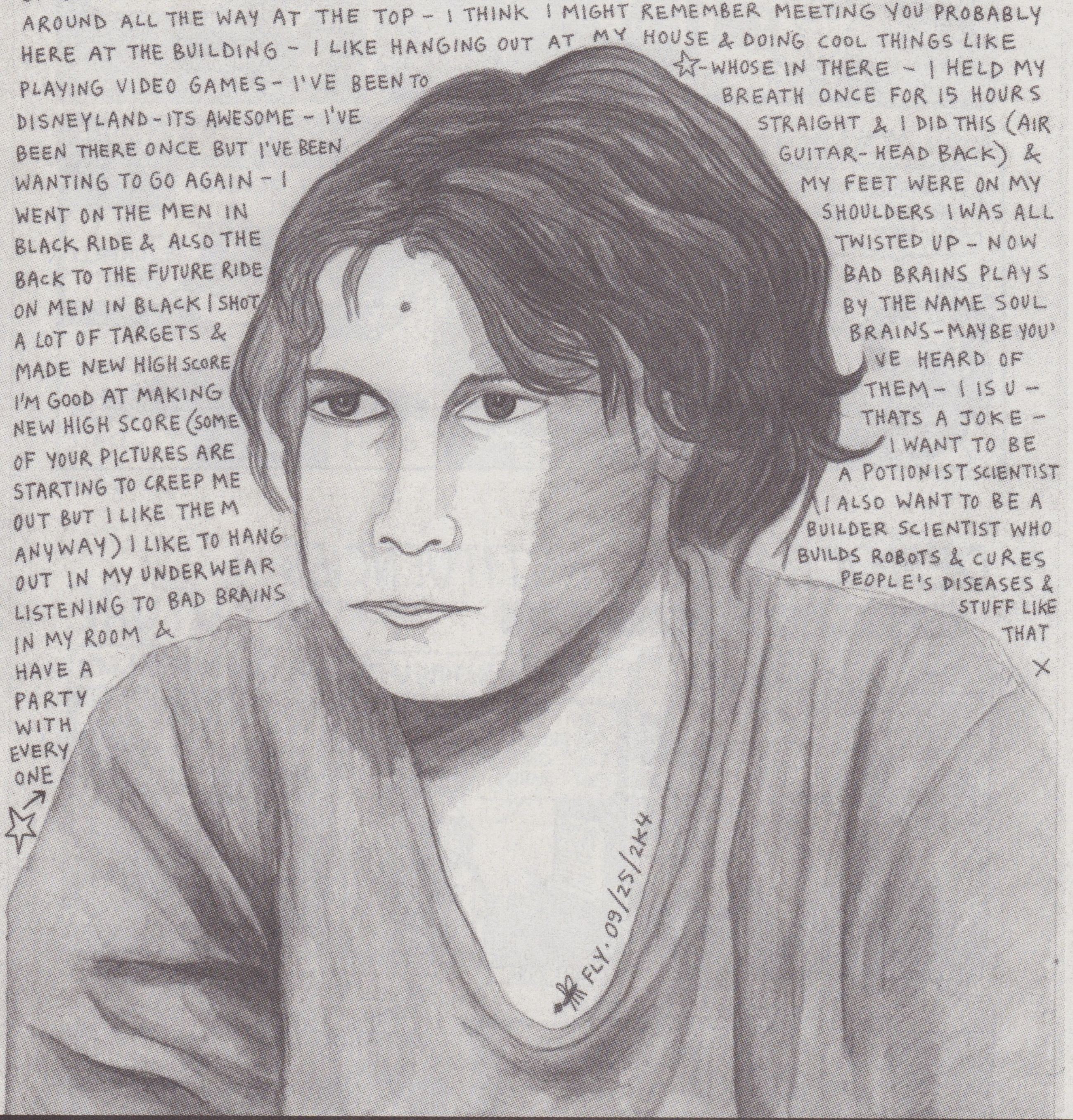

BENJAMIN MUNIZ-ROBERTS—09/25/2K4—LOWER EAST SIDE NYC

BENJAMIN LIVES ON THE TOP FLOOR OF MY BUILDING—HE WAS BORN IN A SQUAT & HAS BEEN SQUATTING HIS WHOLE LIFE—HE MOVED INTO THIS BUILDING WHEN HE WAS 1 YEAR OLD & HE IS NOW ABOUT 7—HE IS ONE OF THE COOLEST & SMARTEST KIDS I KNOW & HE WORKS IN ANIMATION DOING VOICES FOR CARTOONS—A LITTLE OVER A YEAR AGO BEN'S DAD PASSED AWAY VERY SUDDENLY & TRAGICALLY—SINCE THEN BEN HAS BEEN STRONG & POSITIVE & WORKS HARD TO HELP OUT HIS FAMILY—HIS AMAZING MOM & 2 SISTERS—IF YOU WANT TO WRITE TO BEN—I'M SURE HE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU—YOU CAN SEND LETTERS C/O FLY PO BOX 1318 COOPER STN NYC NY10276 USA—OR YOU CAN EMAIL FLY@BWAY.NET & I WILL FORWARD IT TO HIM—THNX!

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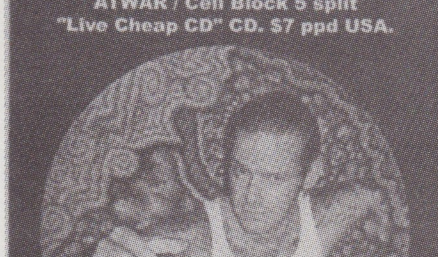
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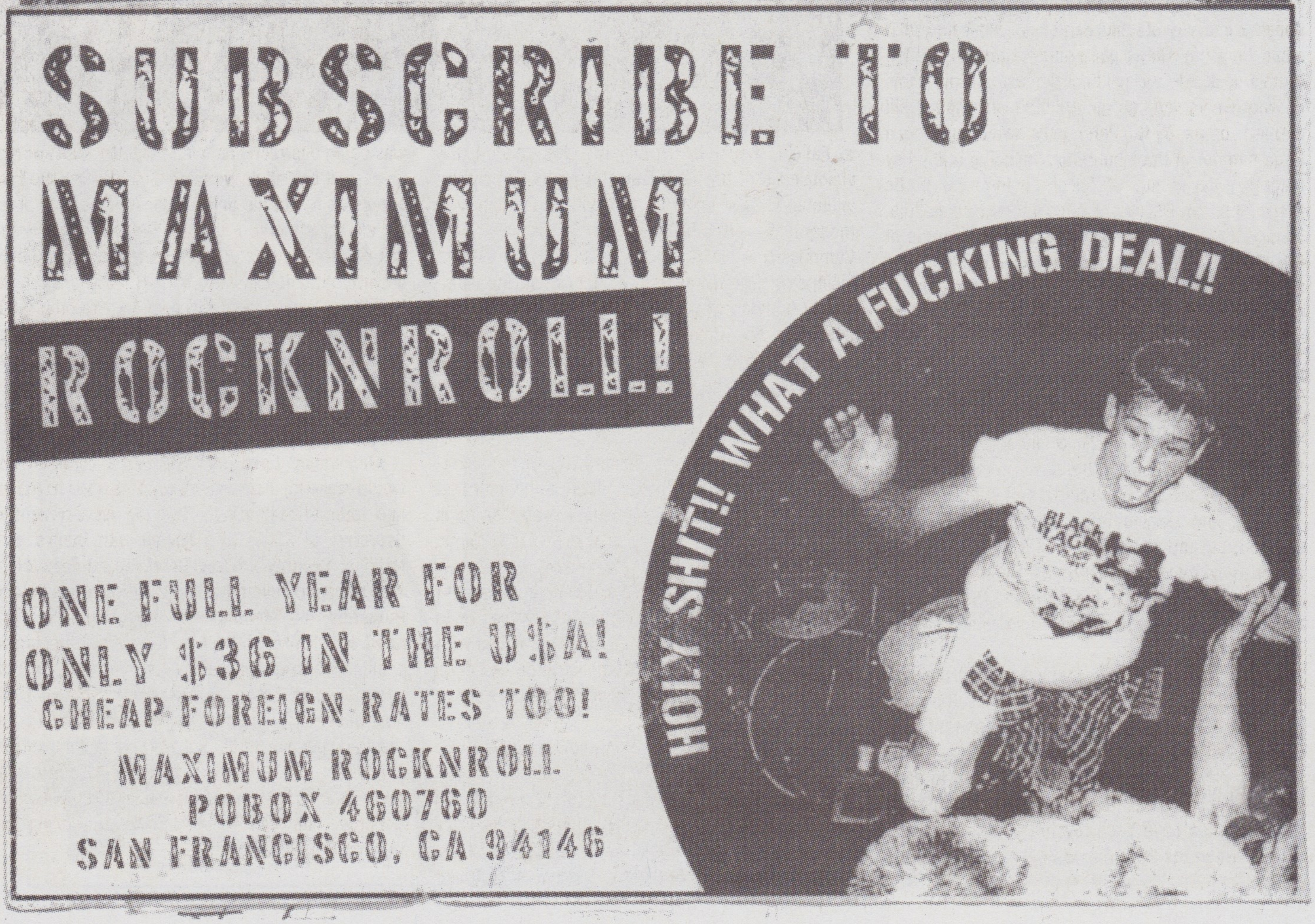

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MRR NEWS

MRR NEWS FOR ISSUE #260 COMPILED BY GOLNAR NIKPOUR

NO VICTORY IN FALLUJA, IRAQ

from an article in The Nation

After a week of fighting, US military commanders proclaimed victory in the battle for Falluja. Yet with this military success has come an even larger setback for the United States and the Allawi government in Iraq. No sooner had American forces begun to enter Falluja than the insurgency escalated in other cities across central Iraq, and the predictable political backlash within the Sunni community began. As a result, Sunni participation in the elections is more uncertain than it was before the attack, and US forces face an even more hostile population in this region of Iraq and yet another humanitarian crisis.

The purpose of the Falluja campaign was to pacify the strategic Sunni triangle in time for the elections planned for January. By ridding Falluja of foreign fighters and hard-core Saddamists, the Pentagon believed it could blunt the insurgency by denying it a key staging center. It also believed it could help the Allawi government lure disgruntled Sunnis back into the political process. On the basis of what we've seen so far, the campaign has failed on both counts. By the Pentagon's own admission, a large number of the insurgents, including many key leaders, filtered out of Falluja before the battle began. And as US forces concentrated on Falluja, insurgents increased their attacks in other parts of the country. Indeed, insurgents' gains arguably outstripped their temporary loss of Falluja, as they reoccupied the city center of Ramadi, renewed their attack on previously pacified Samarra and left government authority tottering in the key city of Mosul.

The Allawi government's strategy of bringing more Sunnis into the process has been damaged. The initial response of the Sunni leadership was overwhelmingly negative; the most prominent Sunni party threatened to withdraw from the interim government, and leading Sunni clerics called for an election boycott. Public outcry over the Falluja attack may make it difficult for Sunni groups to cooperate with Allawi in the run-up to the elections or to participate in a government over which he presides.

As for the Sunni people, many may not have supported the jihadists among them, but they are unlikely to blame them for the catastrophe inflicted on their city. Many of those Sunnis the Allawi government and the Bush Administration want to draw back into the political process are the same people whose homes have been leveled and families displaced. When the 200,000 residents who fled return to Falluja, they'll find a city in ruins. Indeed, the viciousness of the US assault—exemplified by the videotaped fatal shooting of a wounded man in a mosque by a US Marine—led the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to denounce the killings of civilians and injured people, saying violators of human rights laws "must be brought to justice." One Red Cross official estimates that there have been 800 civilian deaths. Meanwhile, more insurgents have been created, not just in Falluja but also in towns and cities across Iraq, and indeed all across the Arab world.

Such, of course, is the dilemma of being an occupying power fighting a nationalist guerrilla war that has taken on deep religious significance—which is why the invasion of Iraq was a colossal strategic misjudgment from the beginning. But this Administration has continued to compound that mistake by refusing either to withdraw its forces or to give way to an international trusteeship. Faced with the prospect of defeat, the Administration has done in Falluja what it knows best: Escalate military action with no regard for the consequences—either for Iraqis or for our long-term position in the Arab and the Islamic world.

The Administration has also, predictably, tried to shift the blame for the worsening outlook for elections to the United Nations. American officials have suggested that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan was being obstructionist with his letter warning that an assault on Falluja would further alienate the Iraqi people and with his unwillingness to commit more UN electoral workers to Iraq. But the White House has no grounds to complain. Despite the dangerous security situation in Iraq, the UN, according to the New York Times, has "succeeded in training 6,000 election registrars and opening up hundreds of registration places across the country." Indeed, because of the UN's heroic efforts, voter registration reportedly is proceeding ahead of schedule—or was, until the Falluja offensive.

One would have hoped that the mess in Iraq would make the Administration more open to reason and international advice. But the replacement of Secretary of State Colin Powell with Bush's loyal National Security Adviser, Condoleezza Rice, along with the speculation that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is staying on, suggests that the Administration is committed to its hard ideological position on Iraq. Thus, we must conclude that the destruction of Falluja is just the beginning of the next phase of a long and costly tragedy for us and the Iraqi people—and that only an active antiwar opposition that builds the broadest possible coalition, one capable of exerting concerted pressure on Congress and the White House, can bring this tragedy to a close.

METRO DETROIT LATINOS AND ARABS JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT DIRTY AIR

From an article by Gregg Krupa and John T. Greilick, *The Detroit News*

Walking along Salina Street in the shadow of the old Rouge Steel plant, Yasser Maisari says he is proud of the new homes in the neighborhood and the new public school for which Arab residents fought so hard.

Just blocks away in southwest Detroit, Angie Reyes points to young Latino families and burgeoning storefront businesses in neighborhoods that are among the most densely populated in the city.

What outrages them and other residents of this historically industrial area—where waves of immigrants have flocked for generations for jobs in the factories and foundries—is living and working in air that is the most polluted in the state and some of the most polluted in the country.

The effort to rid the community of its chronically dirty air and its negative health effects has drawn together Arabs and Latinos, communities often divided by language barriers and culture, in a common battle of political activism at community meetings and public hearings.

"That is the only good part of all this mess," Maisari said, gesturing to the dirty air outside of his door. "It is bringing all of us together. In the process, it is nice to look across the room to see that there are our Latino brothers and sisters. It makes you feel less small."

For Reyes, an activist on issues in the Latino community, it is like seeing the people who are critical to the area's advancement melting together in one pot.

"Our communities really overlap a great deal," Reyes said. "We're attending joint meetings, and some of the leadership has been really working together."

Federal and state officials agree that the dirty air is a significant problem. But the officials also say the air is cleaner than it was, especially 30 years ago, before the Clean Air Act.

For at least five consecutive years, the tiny particles that seem to saturate the air exceed the national standard by measures of 15 percent to 33 percent. Health officials say the minute solids can enter the bloodstream and the lungs, causing cardiovascular problems even in normally healthy people. They also can lead to serious complications for those who suffer chronic health problems like asthma or who are at risk of heart attacks and stroke.

Homes in the neighborhoods, bounded by the Detroit River, Michigan Avenue, Miller Road and West Grand Boulevard, are cheek by jowl with several smaller manufacturing and industrial companies and huge complexes like the Ford Motor Company's River Rouge plant and the former Rouge Steel plant, which is now Severstal North American. While residents say they have concerns about specific local companies in the area, none of them has been cited recently for enforcement actions by the US Environmental Protection Agency or the state Department of Environmental Quality.

Officials of the EPA and DEQ say they will have a plan in place as early as next year that could result in cleaner air over the next several years.

But as they revitalize an old-but-bustling area of Metro Detroit, the residents say they are troubled there has been no crackdown on area businesses that pollute.

This summer, when a local pollution monitor near Salina Elementary School registered the most polluted air in the country, some officials and environmental activists said the high readings were partly caused by dust from a soccer field under construction nearby. But while the air is marginally cleaner since the field was completed, the area still has the grittiest air in the state. John Mooney, an environmental specialist for the EPA office in Chicago, said the recent readings remain the highest in the six-state region that includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin and 35 American Indian tribes.

"The soccer field excuse was a big joke," Maisari said. "All you have to do is walk out in the morning and look at your car. The coating of metallic dust shows how bad it is. "We just want someone to tell us what's in the air, so we know what we are dealing with."

Reyes, Maisari and other activists and residents say they fear there is anecdotal evidence of increasing health problems among their neighbors that may be tied to the pollution—asthma, strokes, cancer and even mental illness. But residents complain that no one is studying the issues.

"What we see is a real problem with pollution levels that are unhealthy for everyone, especially for sensitive populations and particularly people with asthma," said Kathryn Savoie, who works on environmental issues for the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services.

Residents from the diverse ethnic groups are planning participation at public hearings, organizing research and conducting telephone campaigns. They hope their efforts will help document the local sources of pollution and any resulting health problems so they can hold governments and businesses accountable. But they have met with a lot of frustration.

"We try," said Mahmoud Ijbara, who built a new home on Salina Street after he arrived in America from Jordan in 1990. "But every time we ask, especially about health—and that's our main concern, right now—we get nowhere.

"What we are learning is that government and politics are slow and cumbersome," said Ijbara, also known as Mike.

ISRAELI MILITARY CAPTAIN CHARGED IN SHOOTING DEATH OF PALESTINIAN GIRL

From an article by Greg Myers, New York Times

Military prosecutors charged an Israeli army captain with five separate offenses after accusations by fellow soldiers that he repeatedly shot a thirteen-year-old Palestinian schoolgirl to make sure she was dead.

The case has received widespread attention in Israel, where the military is generally held in high regard, and such serious charges against soldiers are rare. Palestinians and human rights watch groups, however, say alleged abuses by the security forces have seldom been investigated fully during the past four years of fighting.

The captain, who has not been identified publicly, was initially cleared of wrongdoing in an internal army investigation into the shooting in the southern Gaza Strip on October 5th when Iman al-Hams was killed as she approached an Israeli military outpost. The captain was arrested about three weeks ago as part of a separate inquiry by the military police.

The girl's family said she was on her way to school.

Soldiers at the outpost have spoken to the Israeli media, saying the girl was initially shot from some distance while carrying a bag suspected of containing explosives, though it held only books. Afterward, the captain approached the girl as she lay on the ground and shot her multiple times, the soldiers said. Palestinian doctors have said she was hit at least fifteen times.

The indictment asserts that the captain walked up to the girl, fired two shots at her from close range, then stepped back and fired an additional ten bullets until his magazine was empty.

Later, the captain attempted to persuade soldiers to change their testimony to say that he fired near, but not at the girl, the indictment adds.

The charges against the officer include two counts of illegally using his weapon, and one count of obstruction of justice, conduct unbecoming of an officer and improper use of authority.

The soldier has denied the charges, Israel radio reported, citing his lawyer.

ARAFAT'S PHYSICIAN SEEKS EXHUMATION

From whatreallyhappened.com

Yasser Arafat's Jordanian physician demanded an autopsy of the body due to the unclear reasons for the Palestinian leader's death. "One of the causes of platelet deficiency is poison," said Ashraf al-Kurdi's, who examined Arafat before he was taken to Paris.

Although "not definitive, I believe the highest reason for Arafat's mysterious death is poisoning," al-Kurdi said.

"Therefore, there should be an autopsy performed," added the Jordanian neurologist.

Gen. Christian Estripeau, spokesperson at the French hospital where Arafat was treated, would not comment.

3,000 SEX WORKERS PROTEST THREAT TO LIVELIHOOD

From an article by Yoav Cerralbo, Seoul Times

For the first time in South Korean history, thousands of sex workers and brothel owners from around the country flocked to the nation's capital building demanding their "rights to make a living" on Oct. 7, 2004.

Donned with sunglasses, baseball caps, and masks to cover their identity more than 3,000 prostitutes and runners of brothels staged a protest in front of the National Assembly building in Seoul's Yeouido district. The women came from twelve of the nations' major cities and provinces' large-scale red-light districts.

The "working girls" from Seoul's Cheongnyangni brothels or " Cheongnyangni 588" were wearing red baseball caps while some from the red-light district by Yongsan Station put on dark blue ones. Each color represented each groups of prostitutes from different districts.

"Is there sisters from Miari? Please rise," shouted one woman using a microphone. "How about sisters from Yeongdeungpo? Stand up, please!"

Every time the "sisters" rose up, cheers and applause broke from the crowd.

The protesters started shouting such slogans as "rights for our life" and "recognize our profession."

The demonstrators were protesting the strict new laws resulted from a recent campaign first launched by women's groups to protect sex workers from the dangers of the industry. Instead, the women rebelled and demanded to be left alone.

Speaking on behalf of the protesters, the Hanteo Workers Union—an association of brothel owners—said that they are looking for separate demands for the women. They have been asking the government to allow them to prepare for the women's life outside the sex industry by putting off enforcement of laws until 2007.

Surrounding the rare demonstrators were a group of detectives in plain clothes who also gathered from police stations in the country.

One special police company of 100 female officers were mobilized for this demonstration. Police also prepared about 60 blankets because there was a "tip" that the demonstrators would stage a "naked" demonstration.

It was the first time in South Korean history that sex workers held a protest rally on a national level.

The protesters were drumming up the mood at the rally by using traditional musical instruments as gongs and drums. They sang popular protest songs such as "Morning Due" and "Firefly."

The prostitutes were demanding their rights to make a living out of "the women's oldest profession." They also demanded that the lawmakers revise "the Special Sex Trade Law," which went into force on Sept. 23, 2004.

Some of the demonstration signs read "Stop Trampling Our Rights for Survival and Recognize Our Profession," "Revise the Special Sex Trade Law," and "Women's Groups Stop Using Us."

Sex trade workers weren't the only ones at the rally. Some merchants who work around the red-light districts also participated in the rally. One merchant said that her business had sharply decreased since the police started cracking down in the Cheongnyangni area.

The new anti-prostitution laws declared "zero-tolerance" towards the sex trade, handing out heavy punishment for sellers, buyers and brothel owners.

Under the law, hundreds of sex traders and customers were rounded up and punished in all the major red-light districts around the country driving prostitutes out of brothels.

The association said that they are developing a strategy of opposition. "We have all promised to show resistance by giving ourselves up to the police together if one brothel gets caught," he said.

The recent crackdown on the sex trade has brought the girls out of the streets and into other clandestine operations such as barbershops, motels, massage parlors and private house calls, which can be dangerous.

Experts warn that the indiscriminate clampdowns on brothels and red light districts might turn the whole nation into a giant island of prostitution.

Hundreds of thousands of South Korean sex trade workers expected to either lose their job or go through financial difficulty since the strict new "Special Sex Trade Law" went into effect. South Korea's booming sex trade business, currently estimated at 24 trillion won (some $2 billion US) annually, is expected to dwindle rapidly with the full enforcement of the law.

Experts argue that government on its side should take some steps for establishing social safety nets for the sex trade workers.

IRAN CONFIRMS BID TO SUSPEND NUCLEAR ENRICHMENT

from payvand.com

Iran said it will start suspending uranium enrichment as of Monday, November 22nd, making good on its word which it gave at a recent agreement with the Europeans. Government spokesman Abdollah Ramezanzadeh, however, stressed that it was Tehran's prerogative to specify 'the extent and duration of the suspension.

"This suspension depends on the commitment of the opposite party and we will test this at the next board of governors' meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)," he told reporters at his weekly news briefing.

"We have voluntarily accepted suspension, since we have no legal obligation in this regard, having done this to bolster general confidence at the regional and international level," he added.

In a confidence-building measure, Iran agreed in its meeting with the three EU states in Paris last week to suspend all activities elated to uranium enrichment in order to avoid a probable showdown.

Uranium enrichment is allowed under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), to which Iran is a signatory, and the country wants it as part of its efforts to master a nuclear fuel cycle.

On Thursday, the IAEA's board of governors is to discuss the nature of Iran's nuclear activities, which the country stresses is aimed at power generation.

Tehran has to prove its nuclear program is civilian or risk being hauled to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

The United States is trying to persuade the world over its allegations that Tehran's nuclear program is a front to build atomic weapons, and pave the way for referral of Iran to the UN Security Council for possible sanctions.

But, the EU trio of Germany, France and Britain pursue a different line, having offered Iran a package of economic incentives in return for suspending uranium enrichment.

The European trio have reached a "preliminary" deal with Iran, under which Tehran would halt an enrichment program in exchange for political and economic incentives. Under the deal, Iran would freeze all nuclear fuel enrichment and reprocessing activities until it has reached a final agreement with the EU over a package of economic, technological and security incentives in return for abandoning nuclear activities. The EU incentives reportedly include a guaranteed supply of reactor fuel, assistance to construction of a light-water power reactor and a resumption of stalled trade talks.

While the Europeans have called on Iran to agree to an indefinite freeze on enrichment, Tehran has expressly stated that it cannot be induced to scrapping the process for good.

LEFTIST ELECTORAL VICTORIES IN LATIN AMERICA

From an article by Humberto Márquez, Gustavo González, and Mario Osava, *Interpress Services*

Socialist Tabaré Vázquez, the candidate of Uruguay's left-wing Broad Front coalition, won the elections by taking at least 51 percent of the vote, thus avoiding a November runoff. Vázquez will be the country's first leftist president, and the Broad Front will hold a majority in both houses of Congress.

In Venezuela, meanwhile, left-leaning President Hugo Chávez chalked up a new victory when candidates from the parties that support him won 20 of the 22 states up for grabs (out of a total of 23), according to the partial returns announced Monday. Although the results for the country's 333 city governments are not yet in, opposition leaders acknowledged that a majority went to the "Chavistas."

Once again, it became clear that six out of ten voters in Venezuela support Chávez, while four back the increasingly divided opposition alliance. In the August 15 presidential recall referendum organized by the Democratic Coordinator opposition coalition, 59 percent of voters came out in favour of Chávez completing his term, compared to 41 percent who wanted him to step down.

Chávez won the 1998 presidential election with 56 percent of the vote, and in 2000 he was re-elected with 60 percent support in polls held under the newly rewritten constitution. According to the partial results from Sunday's regional elections, Chavistas took 60 percent of the vote.

"Actually we have had practically the same election in Venezuela since 1998, with different questions," Germán Campos, a political science professor at Venezuela's Central University, told IPS. "The people's reactions to the elections have been the same" each time.

The statements of political leaders Monday indicate that the results of the August referendum and Sunday's regional elections have brought to an end the years of efforts by the opposition to remove Chávez from power before the end of his term in January 2007.

Since late 2001, the opposition alliance of traditional parties, business and labour associations and private media outlets organised dozens of mass marches, a short-lived coup d'etat that ousted Chávez for two days in April 2002, and a two-month business shutdown and oil industry freeze in December 2002 and January 2003 that caused 10 billion dollars in losses.

On Monday, Chávez, who said in his campaign that he would deepen the "social revolution" in favor of the poor, extended his hand to the opposition and invited all of the new governors and mayors to work together to fight poverty, because "the revolution is here to stay, and Venezuela has changed forever."

Democratic Action is now the country's second-strongest political party, after Chávez's Fifth Republic Movement.

Ramos said he lamented that his party had distanced itself from the "popular sectors" that traditionally supported it, "and for the sake of unity in the efforts to remove Chávez, we accompanied those who "do politics" essentially for the middle and upper classes, without building a strategy of our own, and leaving the people to Chávez."

Farther south, in Chile, the centre-left coalition that has governed since the end of the 1973-1990 dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet also emerged victorious from the municipal elections.

At the same time, small left-wing parties that are not represented in parliament made an unexpectedly strong showing, taking over nine percent of the votes for city councilors and nearly six percent for mayors.

With these results, Juntos Podemos (Together We Can), the electoral alliance created by the Communist and Humanist parties along with smaller left-wing forces that do not legally exist as parties is shaping up to play a key role in deciding the outcome of the December 2005 presidential elections.

Government Minister Francisco Vidal said Monday that the ruling Concertación por la Democracia coalition won 199 mayoral positions, two times the total (98) that will be in the hands of the right-wing alliance. Juntos Podemos, meanwhile, took three or four city governments, according to the partial returns based on 94 percent of the vote.

The Concertación, made up of the Christian Democratic, Socialist, For Democracy and Radical Social Democratic parties, garnered just under 45 percent of the votes for mayors and 48 percent for town councilors.

"This triumph guarantees that there should be a man or a woman from the Concertación right here after March 2006," President Ricardo Lagos, a moderate socialist, enthused Sunday night.

Vidal admitted that the support for the Concertación exceeded the government's expectations.

The outcome of the municipal elections opens the door to a definite possibility that the governing alliance will still be in power after Lagos' term ends in March 2006.

And the Juntos Podemos alliance of tiny parties is likely to once again play a crucial role in determining the outcome of a presidential runoff, as occurred in January 2000. At that time, with less influence at the polls, the communists and their allies tipped the balance in favour of Lagos over right-wing candidate Joaquín Lavín in the second round of voting.

Two of the main aspirants for the Concertación's presidential candidacy are women—former foreign minister Soledad Alvear, of the Christian Democrats, and former defense minister Michelle Bachelet, a socialist.

"Without a doubt, within the ;karma' of the Chilean left of having to support the lesser evil, we would find it less difficult to vote for Michelle Bachelet in a second round against Lavín than to vote for Soledad Alvear" or the other possible contenders, Hortensia López, a long-time supporter of the Communist Party, told IPS Monday.

But Brazil's governing Workers Party (PT), which has gradually moved towards the centre over the years and took power in January 2003, did not share the success enjoyed by the leftist Broad Front in Uruguay, the Chavistas in Venezuela and the governing coalition in Chile.

In fact the president of the PT, José Genoino, recognized the loss of the southern cities Sao Paulo (Brazil's biggest) and Porto Alegre as "significant, heavy defeats." The party, which took the greatest number of votes in the first round of the municipal elections on Oct. 3, suffered other losses as well in the 44 large cities where runoff votes were held.

Besides Sao Paulo, which it lost to the PSDB, the PT will have to hand over the city governments of two important state capitals, Cuiabá and Curitiba, to the same party.

Raul Pont, the PT candidate in Porto Alegre, blamed the party's poor performance this time around largely on unpopular measures taken by the federal government, like reforms of the social security system that created difficulties for pensioners and the tiny rise in the minimum salary.

Porto Alegre has a special symbolic value for the PT, which has governed it for sixteen years.

But Porto Alegre was one of the cities where the growing strength of small centre-left parties was seen. José Fogaça, the candidate of the Popular Socialist Party (former communists), won the post of mayor there. That party also took Boa Vista, the capital of the northern state of Roraima, as well as several other large cities.

RACISM ON THE RISE SAYS UN

From an article by Thalif Deen

The right-wing government of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi has angrily denied charges of racism against its coalition partners, accusations made in a UN report on xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia released here.

"The representatives of these parties spread racist and anti-immigrant discourse in Italian society and have obtained the adoption of a particularly strict immigration law [the Bossi-Fini law, named for the leaders of these two parties], which was recently called into question by the Italian constitutional court," says Doudou Diene, a UN special rapporteur on human rights, in the report.

In his report, Diene says racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia are also on the "upswing" throughout the world.

Diene says the rise in racism worldwide followed the terrorist attacks on the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

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AN ASSAULT ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM: COLUMBIA UNBECOMING IN THE CLEAR LIGHT OF DAY

from an article by Monique Dols, The Electronic Intifada

Over the past several weeks, claims of intimidation in the department of Middle Eastern and Asian Languages and Cultures (MEALAC) of Columbia University have hit newspapers around the world. Accusations of one-sidedness and anti-Americanism abound. It is all based on a previously unreleased film *Columbia Unbecoming,* which purports to document incidences of intimidation and anti-Semitism in the classroom. The "underground documentary" that has been touted by major New York City press has been released. We can finally begin an honest discussion.

The film cannot seriously be called a documentary. It is a collection of uncorroborated claims made by students—many of them students who have never taken a class with the Professors they are supposedly exposing—with a political axe to grind. Not once are the accused professors asked for their views. And the opinions of the many satisfied MEALAC students are systematically excluded. The perspective put forward by the film represents a very narrow subset of the Columbia student body. It's a group of students that are extremely outspoken and un-apologetic supporters of the state of Israel. We are talking about students with a well-funded and dominant political agenda who are in no way marginalized from the public discourse. In my time at Columbia, I have come to recognize a number of the names behind the film. They are students who mounted a campaign of defamation against Professor Edward Said. They launched a well funded and so-far successful publicity stunt against a modest divestment campaign from Israeli weapons manufacturers in 2002. These cohorts turned out a counter-demonstration to the thousands strong student walkout on campus the week after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Hardly a silenced bunch.

In the Spring of 2001, I took Professor Joseph Massad's class, *Israeli-Palestinian Politics and Societies.* It was a class that exposed me for the first time to a history and critique of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism. As most people in this country I had never been exposed to any deep history or analysis of what seemed to me to be a complicated and age-old conflict. Professor Massad's engaging lectures and—just as importantly—his openness to discussion and disagreement in the classroom opened my eyes to an entirely new realm of debate. I took the class with Noah Lieben, one of the foremost critics of Massad and MEALAC. I am deeply disturbed by accusations put forward by Lieben in *Columbia Unbecoming,* and would have been happy to express them in the film if asked. Lieben's interventions and aggressive disagreements in class helped deepen my understanding of Zionism, and create a stimulating environment for debate. Professor Massad always respectfully fielded Lieben's and others' questions and points. At times the debate took over to the detriment of keeping up with the syllabus. But it was an invaluable part of the process and made it one of the best and most rigorous classes in my four years at Columbia University.

As opposed to their stated goals, the filmmakers have created a witch-hunt atmosphere on campus. They are trying to silence and marginalize the minority, anti-Zionist position. Rather than protecting "academic integrity" they are waging a full assault on it. The effect of the film has been to narrow the scope of what is taught in the classroom. Professor Massad has been pressured out of teaching his class this spring. And a number of professors in the MEALAC department have received racist emails and death threats. Among them, Professor Massad received an email from Columbia Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine Moshe Rubin, which was excerpted without comment by the Columbia *Spectator:* "Go back to Arab land where Jew hating is condoned. Get the hell out of America. You are a disgrace and a pathetic typical Arab liar." A university task force to further investigate the incidences of anti-Arab racism at Columbia, anyone?

Let's be clear about what is at stake here. Since September 11, 2001 thousands of Arabs, South Asians and Muslims have been deported and disappeared into detention centers. The US has held over 560 people without trial in an internment camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Attacks on Arabs and those who "appear" Arab or Muslim are on the rise. The Columbia campus is not sheltered from this reality. The FBI has visited Arab and international students and the Columbia University administration has facilitated this process by turning over student records to the Department of Homeland Security. The makers of this film have created an atmosphere on campus that dovetails with this national climate of racist scapegoating. It would behoove the Columbia University administration to leap to the defense of an untenured Arab professor who is defamed and harassed out of teaching his class. Instead the administration has given credence to the politically motivated claims.

This is not a conflict between Jewish students and everyone else on campus. Hundreds of students turned out to the film's premier. In the discussion period following the film, many Jews braved a largely hostile atmosphere to challenge the validity of the "documentary," and voiced their opposition to the harassment of MEALAC. They spoke passionately in defense of Professor Massad, and the harassment leveled at Jews on campus who criticize Israel. Stephanie Schwartz, a student at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS), a self-identified anti-Zionist Jew, spoke of the daily haranguing that she faces for wearing a *keffiyeh* (a Palestinian scarf) in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

Schwartz explains that: "The dialogue about Israel at JTS is extremely narrow. I can say that I don't agree with all of Ariel Sharon's policies, but it's almost unheard of for someone to say that they don't support Israel's 'right' to attack Palestinians. One of my professors, in a discussion about all of the various movements of Judaism in America today, said that the only thing that unites American Jews is support for Israel. It's just assumed that we're all Zionists." The tragedy is that Jews cannot study their history and religion without being bombarded by Zionism. The red herring of this debate is that the small number of students who made this film claim to speak for the experience of all Jews. Meanwhile they continue to make life difficult for anti-Zionist Jews and non-Jews alike on campus.

Still, the makers of the documentary insist that their film is not about politics. The fact that *The David Project* sponsored their film—a Boston-based pro-Israel group that was expressly formed in the spring of 2002 as a counter-weight to the headway of the Palestine solidarity movement on campuses—goes unmentioned. But the movement behind *The David Project* and the recent hysteria of academic intimidation on campus deserves attention. It is part and parcel of a larger campaign involving a coalition of groups including McCarthyite groups such as Campus Watch who aim to marginalize voices questioning the US and Israel's place in the Middle East. It is a dishonest attempt to use "academic integrity" as a cover for bullying and censorship. If academic integrity is really what this is about, then let us create real parity in the MEALAC department. We can start with a Center for Palestine Studies with a tenured chair. And then maybe we can talk about where to build a multi-million dollar facility to house it.

The problem is that there is no parity between the two sides of this debate. The accusers are not the victims. The charges are on par with claims of racism from white students in an African American history course. When the Palestine solidarity movement was at its height during the spring of 2002, hundreds of Columbia students, faculty and staff refused to go on with business as usual while Palestinians were bulldozed into their homes. We walked out, sat-in and insisted that an occupied, ghettoized, and impoverished people have a right to resist their oppressors. Today apologists for Israel have made headway on rolling this back. The flurry of bogus accusations brought out by this film has shown the urgency for a strong, self-confident Palestine movement on this campus and in this country. It is desperately needed as the US and Israel stand poised to remake the map of the Middle East. In the wake of Israel's "Days of Penitence" massacre of over 100 Palestinians in Northern Gaza, it is critical. Now that *The David Project's* propaganda film has seen the light of day we can have a real debate and begin that work.

LABOR ORGANIZER KILLED IN EL SALVADOR

From an article by Steven Greenhouse, *New York Times*

Gilberto Soto, a union organizer in New Jersey, was so upset by the wages and working conditions of truck drivers in Central America that when he went home to visit his mother in El Salvador and celebrate his 50th birthday this month, he added a week to his vacation to go to ports to see about unionizing them.

On the eve of his birthday, he stepped outside of his family's longtime home in Usulután to talk on his cellphone. "We suddenly heard three shots," recalled his sister Arel, who was inside. "He immediately called out to my mother, saying, 'Mamá, they're killing me.' "

The killing, on Nov. 5, has deeply unsettled American labor leaders, who called for an investigation. They suspect that Mr. Soto, an organizer for the Teamsters, was gunned down as part of a systematic effort to suppress union activity in El Salvador.

John J. Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, and James P. Hoffa, president of the Teamsters, met with El Salvador's ambassador in Washington on Tuesday to press his government to track down the killers.

"We told the ambassador of our deep concern about the lack of any type of meaningful investigation," Mr. Hoffa said. "We're concerned that Gilberto Soto was murdered because of his intention to meet with labor leaders and truck drivers in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras."

American labor unions have promised a $75,000 reward to anyone who provides information leading to the conviction of Mr. Soto's killers.

The Salvadoran ambassador, René León, said in an interview that he had spoken with his country's president after the meeting and that he was told the police were investigating the killing.

Saying that political crimes in El Salvador had dropped sharply in the past decade, Ambassador León cautioned against concluding that it was a political assassination. "We don't want a situation where this murder is not resolved, because that is not good for our democracy," he said. "We want this case to be solved."

He said his government was not speculating on the cause of the slaying, although family members voiced concern that the police appeared to focus their investigation on whether it was a gang or drug killing.

Mr. Soto's brother-in-law, Carlos Chacón, who came to the United States this week to attend the funeral, said the idea that Mr. Soto was involved in a gang or drug crime was absurd. Mr. Soto, he said, was a family man in Cliffside Park, NJ, a father of three, who was active in his church.

The former New Jersey governor, James E. McGreevey, had appointed him to the state's Environmental Justice Advisory Council. Mr. Soto was also engaged with leftist political groups like the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, as well as a group that provided computers to his homeland.

In recent years, he focused on organizing thousands of truck drivers at ports from Newark to Boston.

"The neighbors all told us there were three people who attacked him," Mr. Chacón said. "They didn't steal anything from him. They didn't talk to him. They all ran in different directions."

Adding to labor leaders' concerns, CEAL, a Salvadoran labor rights group that was publicizing the murder, said that its office was ransacked Saturday and that its computer and communications equipment were stolen.

Mr. Soto's younger brother, Francisco, an occasional truck driver in New Jersey, said he hoped to take up his brother's work organizing port drivers. "Maybe I don't have his talents, but I hope to continue his work," Francisco Soto said, tears streaming from his eyes. "He was my hero."

CONGRESS MOVES TO FURTHER RESTRICT ACCESS TO ABORTIONS

from democracynow.org

In news from Capitol Hill, Congress approved a massive $388 billion spending bill on Saturday. While the bill curtailed federal spending in most non-defense areas it also included provisions that may restrict the right of women to obtain abortions and the number of students who can receive college aid. The bill includes a provision that will make it easier for health care providers and insurance companies to refuse to provide abortions or offer abortion counseling. House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California described the amendment as "essentially a domestic gag rule" that will restrict access to abortion counseling, referral and information. Pelosi criticized the amendment, which she said will essentially allow hospitals and health care companies to ignore Roe v Wade.

GOVERNMENT USES COLOR LASER PRINTER TECHNOLOGY TO TRACK DOCUMENTS

From an article by Jason Tuohey, Medill News Service

Next time you make a printout from your color laser printer, shine an LED flashlight beam on it and examine it closely with a magnifying glass. You might be able to see the small, scattered yellow dots printer there that could be used to trace the document back to you.

According to experts, several printer companies quietly encode the serial number and the manufacturing code of their color laser printers and color copiers on every document those machines produce. Governments, including the United States, already use the hidden markings to track counterfeiters.

Peter Crean, a senior research fellow at Xerox, says his company's laser printers, copiers and multifunction workstations, such as its WorkCentre Pro series, put the "serial number of each machine coded in little yellow dots" in every printout. The millimeter-sized dots appear about every inch on a page, nestled within the printed words and margins.

"It's a trail back to you, like a license plate," Crean says.

The dots' minuscule size, covering less than one-thousandth of the page, along with their color combination of yellow on white, makes them invisible to the naked eye, Crean says. One way to determine if your color laser is applying this tracking process is to shine a blue LED light—say, from a keychain laser flashlight—on your page and use a magnifier.

Lorelei Pagano, a counterfeiting specialist with the US Secret Service, stresses that the government uses the embedded serial numbers only when alerted to a forgery. "The only time any information is gained from these documents is purely in [the case of] a criminal act," she says.

John Morris, a lawyer for The Center for Democracy and Technology, says, "That type of assurance doesn't really assure me at all, unless there's some type of statute." He adds, "At a bare minimum, there needs to be a notice to consumers." If the practice disturbs you, don't bother trying to disable the encoding mechanism—you'll probably just break your printer. Crean describes the device as a chip located "way in the machine, right near the laser" that embeds the dots when the document "is about 20 billionths of a second" from printing.

Neither Crean nor Pagano has an estimate of how many laser printers, copiers, and multifunction devices track documents, but they say that the practice is commonplace among major printer companies.

Unlike ink jet printers, laser printers, fax machines, and copiers fire a laser through a mirror and series of lenses to embed the document or image on a page. Such devices range from a little over $100 to more than $1000, and are designed for both home and office.Since then, he says, many other companies have adopted the practice.

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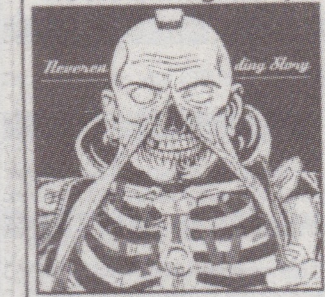

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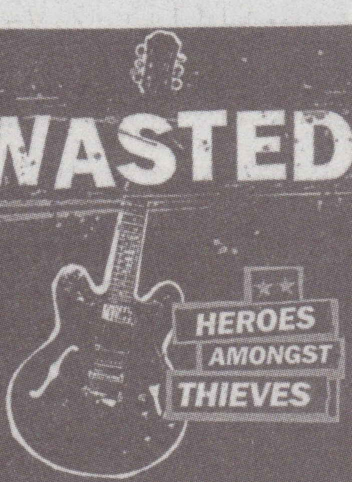

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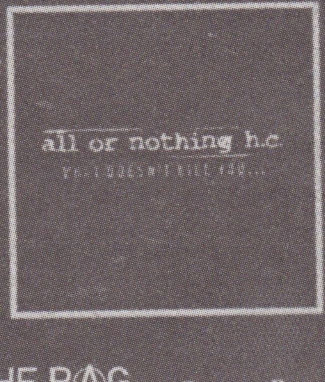

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APA KHABAR?

A SOUTH EAST ASIAN FEATURE
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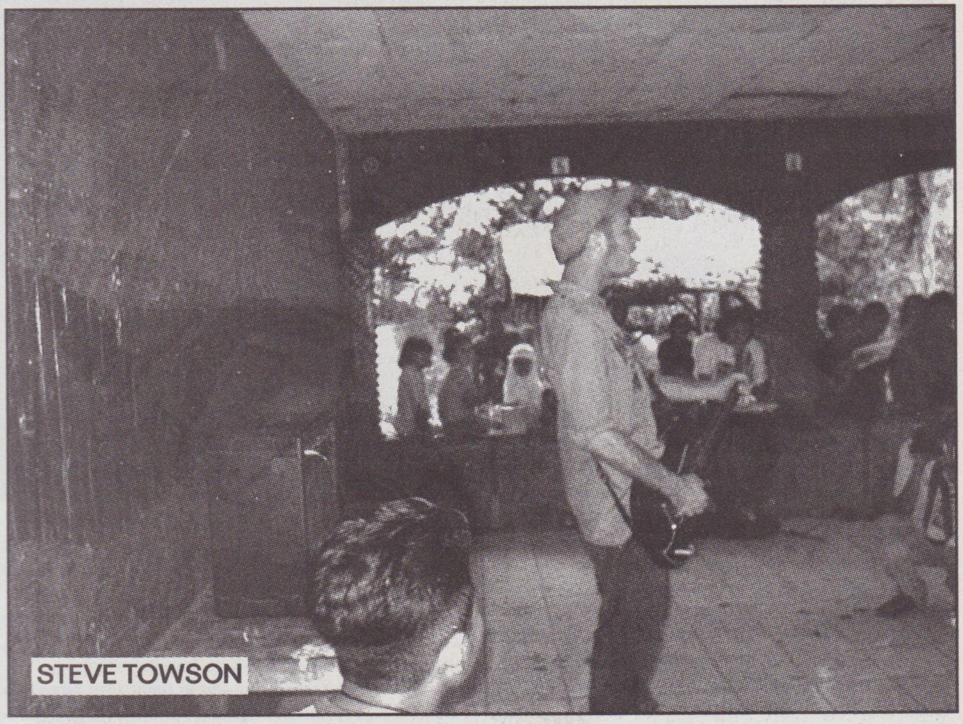


STEVE TOWSON

Warmest greetings once again from Asia. It has been a busy year for the regional DIY HC punk community here. Communication amongst South East Asian punks is at an all time high, and some of us have been commuting almost regularly in and around the region. So much that the regional scene almost feels like one giant one!

Next year will be even crazier. As I type, punks are preparing for tours of these bands: UNHOLY GRAVE (Japanese grind gods); PISSCHRIST (Australian scum crust-core!); PACK (devastating HC from Switzerland); S.O.L. (devastating HC grind from Germany); MY DISCO (Australian post HC punk); and AMBASSADOR 21 (Belarus digital HC). And these are just the bands that are confirmed! I am shivering with excitement as we await the final word from the bands that have tentative plans to come. And, by the time you read this Hungarian anarcho punks BARACKCA and solo folk guitar act RACHEL JACOBS of the USA will have already swarmed the region on tour!

It's definitely an improvement from the past decade where we had only 1 touring band every 2 or 3 years! Before you know it we could have on average a band a month! This is wild!

Anyway enough shit talking. Lets move on to the main topic of this installment, the STEVE TOWSON *Straits of Gibraltar* tour report! With this report I hope to offer you punks a perspective of touring in Indonesia, the largely Muslim country far too often linked to terrorism and immense poverty, that perhaps will dispel whatever insecurities you have about the place. It might not be a punk rock tour report per se, but it will hopefully shed light on what to expect over here.

STEVE TOWSON "Straits of Gilbraltar" Indonesian tour, Jakarta – Bandung (Indonesia), August 17th – 29th 2004.

Due to the success (artistic not financial, ha-ha) of the STEVE TOWSON *Peninsular Takeover* tour (Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand) of late 2003, STEVE TOWSON, the one-man distorted, folk, punk machine from Australia hooked up with me again to tour Indonesia. He kindly offered to pay for my flight-a free flight to Indonesia! Needless to say it would be stupid to reject such an offer.

Planning for the tour was a headache. Not too many punks over there have home Internet access, and only a handful of them are able to converse in English. The fact that my knowledge of Bahasa, Indonesia, is terrible, does not help.

However, with time, everything fell together with what seemed a stroke of luck. I relied on two of my contacts, one in Jakarta, and one in Bandung, letting them string together a series of shows, and made sure my schedule revolved around theirs-as it should be-not the other way round. Interestingly, though not surprisingly, I found out that all my contacts knew one another- small punk rock world.

Steve had a show the previous night in Singapore (on a stopover) with local acts ONE MAN NATION (melodic solo punk rock) and SELF–HATRED (off key distorted solo punk) that ended really late. Our flights were at 7:45 am the next morning so after the show we decided to spend the night at the airport. A safe bet knowing that I can't wake up early! Both Steve and I were scheduled to fly at the same time but on separate flights (cost factors), so with this predicament I sensed a crazy and unpredictable time ahead of me. Punk rock!

Day 1: I checked in at Singapore's Changi Airport very early, around 5:45 am. It has been many years since I last flew and it was my first time flying alone so I was excited. I checked in both my bags with *Valuair*. After this I felt odd because I was the only passenger with no hand luggage, hence no access to my zines that were already on the plane before me. Luckily the flight was only a little over an hour otherwise I would be bored to death.

The journey itself was funny. *Valuair* is a budget airline that serves good food and has singing stewardesses. Punk rock.

I landed at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International airport around eight o'clock in the morning, soon finding out that one of my bags was missing. Fuck! Barely 10 minutes in Indonesia and trouble. I lodged a complaint but was still disappointed. It contained clothing, underwear (important!), some tour related diaries, and my favorite *Digicore Far East* limited edition shirt!

At the airport, I was greeted by Vantiani (aka Ika) of Peniti Pink distro and Ari of DOMESTIK DOKTRIN. It was really sweet of them to pick me up. Steve came along within the next 10 minutes or so, and after introductions, we chatted about stuff.

From the airport we took a cab to Ika's place in Jakarta Selatan (South). It is located at the far end of an alley of houses, adorned with street hawkers and little kids running around everywhere. Her place was amazing! It is a two-story unit with an exterior that has been repainted with various punk rock images, an evil looking Ronald McDonald, and loads of graffiti and street art. The walls inside were similar with pictures of that *Emily's Strange* character and some punk HC posters/flyers. There was no furniture, only a shelf with zines, tapes and CDs. Zines and papers filled the pigeonhole shelf in the first floor room and there were kid's drawings on the walls.

I loved the place immediately. I put my stuff down, shook hands and made friends with everyone that come by that day: Marduk, Anggi, Gofar, Gita, Shaun (who was on a scholarship from Australia), and more!

Incidentally that day was a public holiday in Indonesia, supposedly their Independence Day. I wasn't complaining though.

Day 2: Finally my distress was over; the airport staff called to tell me they had retrieved my bag! I was totally happy. Yet, I could not avoid feeling like a pussycat for worrying too much. Then again I had a substantial reason to worry with all of the many important items inside!

Anyway, Anggi took Steve and I to the place of Tempequality Distro. We jumped on a bus in a nearby district and the bus ride itself was fucking exciting! Coming from Singapore, with a smooth, disciplined, and world-class transport system, the bus in Indonesia felt like a roller coaster ride. First, the bus does not stop. It slows down for a brief moment and in that split second you jump on. I clung on to the steps (a far cry from the "No Standing On Steps" rule in Singapore's air-conditioned buses!) and held for my dear life on the railings with Jakarta traffic breezing through just a step away! At that point it was already close to 6 pm-rush-hour!

We got off at a weird place, cut through lanes and alleys, and then took a shortcut through a serene little village. When we turned the corner, almost out of nowhere a little hut with a stage outside appeared. I realized it was Rontax Studio, where Steve was due to play his first show; I loved the location. Right in the middle of a *kampung* (village), you have a stage with coconut trees and little kids running about. Across the street was a railway station. Punk rock. Steve did his soundcheck just to make sure everything was OK and there were about a million mosquitoes inside. Even more punk rock.

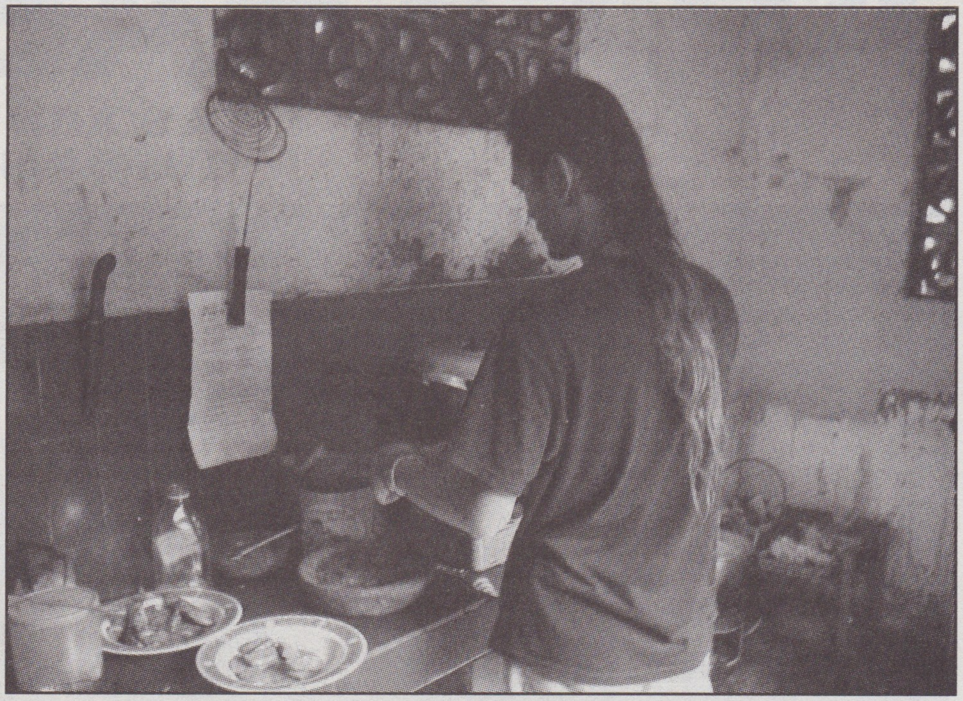
After 30 minutes or so we made our way to the Tempequality Kolektif place, which is run by the guys in punk bands DISLIKE and MARJINAL, as well as the old label Berontak Records. Outside the place looks like a typical house and some friendly punks at the gate who invited us in and greeted us. I spoke whatever bits of Bahasa possible but was quickly distracted by the amazing interior of the place. Like Ika's place, artwork-avant garde and political-decorated the walls. There was a rack with shirts done by the people in the collective as well as a shelf with tapes and CDs and buttons and patches for sale. I went up to the second story to find more punks in there, messing about with a computer and some music equipment. We introduced ourselves and talked for a while.

Mike, a local, gave us a small tour of the place. He showed us materials that they used, artwork, their little library, the kitchen and more. I immediately bought a bag (which the collective made from scratch!) with the words "KAMPUNGKU–TINGGAL KENANGAN" (*my hometown–what is left are memories)* and a compilation tape.

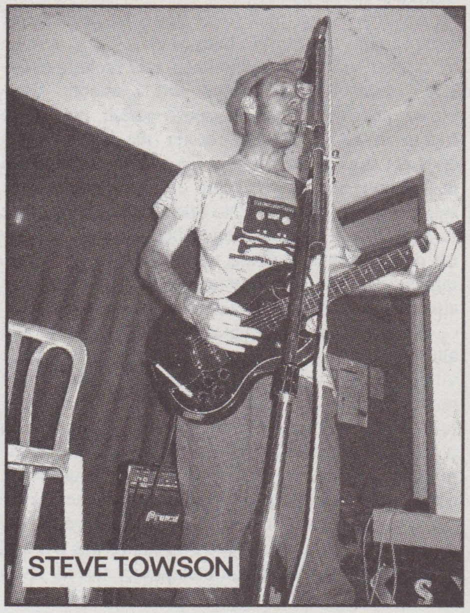
We spent a few hours talking and making friends. I even did some translations for Steve-suddenly I felt so important! Ha-ha. Overall it was a great night; we went back to Ika's place around 11:00 pm, feeling overwhelmed by this constructive experience.

Day 3: The day passed by while we had no concrete plans. We planned to go to Tempequality Kolektif's place again but ended up being lazy and not making it. Shortly after lunch, we had visitors. We met the guy from Teriak Records and a friendly guy named Edo. Again we socialized, though Steven and I felt a strong need to check our emails; Edo helped us with that task.

We headed down to a hotel-complex called BLOK M Plaza after 10 minutes by bus. No punk rock bus rides this time but still cool. We checked our emails, walked around a bit, and did typical, tourist-at-the-mall stuff. Edo next brought us out of BLOK M Plaza to a little stall under an overhead bridge that turned out to be a distro! They had silk-screened shirts (anti-BUSH, anti-IMF, a million band shirts) and tapes and CDrs for sale. Most of them were fucking bootlegs though, with some supposed represses. I wonder though whether the represses were legit or bootlegs as well. Eventually, I bought two bootlegs of two very commercial punk-based bands. Suspect your band is one of them? Ask me. He-he-he…



Day 4: We went back to the Tempequality Kolektif place today with Marduk. The nice folks over there offered to do some artwork with us. We observed as they taught us how to do DIY art. With help we did some wood carvings and DIY prints, and even tried doing it ourselves.



STEVE TOWSON

At one point we all took a break for lunch. There were no plates to share, only a giant, old glass and plastic pane that has been cleaned thoroughly. On it were lots of rice, tempeh, sambal, fish, and vegetables which everyone shared. We all squatted and sat on the floor and used our fingers. This was a classic Indonesian-Malay style-communal meal. Punk rock.

Eventually, we went home slightly after dark. Didi of *Empathy Lies Far Beyond* zine joined us. Really nice guy, and looked like he could have been in a Ramones cover band. He was nice, could decipher the dumb inside-jokes between Steven and I, and he does a zine. He's punk rock.

To get home, we hopped on a train that was pretty punk rock too, like their buses. No doors, half a stadium filled the carriages and lots of buskers and beggars. I was pretty affected at the levels of poverty by then. Looking at pictures of the suffering is one thing, seeing them in real life is another. There were blind people asking for money, little kids selling tissues and drinks, and some kids and buskers who had *real* talent.

When we got back, we met the dudes from SOCIAL DISTRUST, Mencret Records, Mandra and Aca of RELATIONSHIT and others. Oh, had that Gofar clown was around as well.

We socialized (what else?) and Gofar and I had a little wrestling match. Everyone watched and I felt like a celebrity wrestler for a while, even though we nearly suffocated each other.

As the night wore on we had a discussion about the forthcoming BARACKCA tour. I greatly appreciated the interest and organizational skills of *everyone* who sat in; there was an equal amount of input from everyone, and everyone had something the Singapore scene hasn't had for a long time-common sense.

Day 5: Gig day. Even though this was the first show after so many days, it didn't feel like a waste. The things I learned from *everyone* I met in just a matter of days could easily eclipse the lessons I learned from scene-related occurrences in Singapore in *one year*. Forgive my cynicism but that's how I felt, leaving and observable nothingness to an actual avenue of conviction and change.

First thing in the morning I met Ina from OPUSAN BANGSAT (killer punk!) and her friend Nune. Both came all the way from Jogjakarta. We waited till everyone was ready so we could go to the show together.

Again we took the punk rock bus with everyone cramming in the vehicle. Like all bus rides, its Rp1, 000 per ride wherever you go-fucking cheap.

When we reached the venue there was already a small crowd forming. Kids and curious villagers gathered to watch. Picture this: a rock show in the middle of a village with dense vegetation and a railway station across the street. Not a lot of heavy distorted stuff here just really intense music with a simple set up.

Steve dished out his trademark distorted, folk, punk rock, and shared the stage with a few other bands. This show didn't have a flyer so please excuse my forgetfulness. From what I remember, there was: MARJINAL (the Tempequality guys with an almost a capella set of anthemic punk); EVERYBODY LOVES IRENE (superb dream pop); and some good soft rock by VIRGIN MARY and RANGGA. To the other bands that played, again, sorry for not mentioning you. Overall, it was an awesome first show, except for the crazy mosquitoes.

Day 6: This was the day we headed off to Bandung, a city that is about 3 hours away. We bought train tickets for the Executive Class area-the best and most expensive. I could never afford the highest-class trains anywhere so I jumped at the chance. The ticket cost us Rp 65,000 each, about $13. Come to think of it, that was not that cheap!

Executive Class passengers enjoy an air-conditioned journey and have seats that enabled me stretch. There was odd company of high-flying execs and rich families sharing the carriage.

We reached Bandung about 3 hours later. The station was packed but we spotted Ari within moments. It felt really good to see him again. He brought along 2 friends, Pam from the legendary RUNTAH and Alex from the mad, metal, rock and roll thrash band MUNTAH. The guys in Bandung had a cool poster made up promoting all of Steve's shows, which were all free and with the involvement of Food Not Bombs.

On to the first Bandung show-it was held at Toko Buku Kecil aka Tobucil which is a community bookstore that rents and sells books. It also is a meeting place, a conference area, and has a beautiful garden. They had a nice toilet too!

Steve's set started about an hour or so after we arrived and it was a microphone-less set, which resulted in him screaming over an electric guitar. He played in a little hallway with benches scattered everywhere and no one else played. Ari handed out lyrics sheets and also provided translations before and after Steve's songs. That was really important so everyone could understand what was going on.

I donated a few bills to the Food Not Bombs and had rice with cabbage-carrot stew. Not really my kind of meal but I appreciated it nonetheless. Oh, and they also had garlic, chili sauce to go along with the stew. Punk rock.

Day 7: The second show of Bandung and the third of the tour. This time it was at Babakan Siliwangi, which was actually a public space that used to house an eatery as well as a village themed walkway. The state actually has plans to shut it down and redevelop it into a residential area or something.

Steve's set was in one of the huts, and again no microphones. EVERYBODY LOVES IRENE was supposed to be on the bill but due to obvious technical inadequacies, they didn't play. So, it was screamy folk rock with translations again.

SINGLET

By then a small crowd of village folk had gathered, with many little kids wondering who the screaming white guy was. Overall, I sensed a great feeling of participation and interest amongst everyone, especially since Food Not Bombs was serving delicious authentic *gado-gado* (a dish of tofu, potatoes, crackers, tempeh, vegetables served with spicy peanut sauce).

We had the usual post-show get-together and dinner at a Mexican-styled café afterwards. We stayed at the place of a guy whom everyone calls Mas Aji, who does art-related work. His place is located quietly atop a hill with neighbors all around-really nice place with a wonderful breeze after dark.

Day 8: Off day. I was tired and couldn't even be bothered to wear shoes. I washed my socks, hung them on the clothesline to dry, and wore slippers the rest of the day.

After grabbing some lunch and drinking cup after cup of fresh fruit juice (their ice blended soursop is the best ever!), and with Steve getting a silly haircut at a sillier looking salon, we headed downtown to go disc hunting. I bought some Playstation games for myself and my gamer-freak dad, and a copy of *Malam Satu Suro*, the famous Indonesian horror flick. Steve bought hordes of pirated music.

Steve complained of nasal mucus and sinus problems, the normal shit that comes with touring, so we had a traditional Javanese massage. It was a lady who was famous in Mas Aji's neighborhood for giving traditional massages, and anyone who needs one just calls her. She charged Rp 30,000, which is about $6. I can't get a massage at that rate in Singapore, so I wanted one as well. After two hours Steve's and my backaches and headaches, and for him, his nasal-mucus-whatever, were no longer a problem.

Day 9: I woke up to a delicious breakfast of rice fish tempeh and vegetables. Yummy. Steve had another massage. His nasal mucus whatever thing didn't disappear like I thought it would. We headed to the fourth show of the tour, but stopped at a xerox center to copy more lyric sheets. We bumped into Deden who does a cool zine called *xLAPUKx*.

Finally we arrived at the show and it was an odd place. Basically, Steve was going to be busking. The venue was actually the stairs of a state owned place hence the name (BALAI KOTA). It wasn't an official show; it was basically a large group of people sitting outside the government building and gathering to watch Steve perform. A bit like how some of us punks in Singapore used to sit on the stairs of the High Courts, until the bastard guards banned everyone from sitting there.

Ari told me that the stairs are where the punk HC collective in Bandung would gather and discuss upcoming shows and projects. Really cool place.

I was a bit taken aback by the fact that the state-owned building didn't have guards and loads of security walking about. It was open to the public and had kids playing football on the pavements. I would compare the situation to my friends and I playing soccer on the grass patches of the Parliament House but never getting chased out.

On to the show-again, no microphones, and about 30 people gathered to observe Steve's performance, but this time without Food Not Bombs. Even the guards took notice and sat on the steps to watch. And everyone said I reminded her or him of Arian 13 (of *Tigabelas* zine and SERINAI fame). Must be the glasses and goatee. Punkrock.

We then headed out for the second show, though this show wasn't on our schedule as it was a last minute invite from the organizers who approached him at the Babakan Siliwangi show. The show was in this place called Dago Pojok, and it also lies smack in the middle of a village. This was a village event. A four-day art event with exhibits of children's art on one side of the road and music performances on the other.

The show was kicked off with a traditional musician who played the *kecapi*, a rhythmic percussion thing with some singing. There was also this really good and high-spirited poet reciting some seemingly good satire, which captured the attention of the audience.

Steve was the highlight of the show. I guess many of the townsfolk don't really get to meet that many Caucasian performers. Plus he has CDs out and goes on tour. No big deal to us DIY punks but to *common* people it probably is.

He was welcomed with a rapturous reception and their cheers escalated when Ari translated the meanings of the songs to them. These common people probably felt and understood what Steve meant when he described the ethos of how work could eradicate one's ability to be around their loved ones, and of course when he slammed war and George Bush.

There were even clap and sing-along songs that old ladies and their kids joined. There were some youths who asked for a Ramones cover. All very cool.

And yes, this time he had a microphone.

Food Not Bombs was there and gave out some brew-perfect hot ginger drinks. It was perfect to quench our dry throats and to rid Steve's and me of the nasal-mucus-whatever.

Day 10: Today is the day we return to Jakarta. Ari and the whole crew that spent the night with us (Deden, Irfan and others) had lunch together. I had a delicious meal of rice, potato, bagedil, vegetables, tempeh and whatever else there was to eat.

We were then taken to the bus depot where we boarded a coach to Jakarta and reached Jakarta close to nightfall. Everyone at the bus station was seemingly amazed at the presence of Steve. That part of Jakarta isn't exactly a touristy area, as no white people seem to want to go there. I looked similar to the locals so I didn't get much attention. I get this too in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, so I guess I'm a South East Asian poster boy. Not that I could be bothered though; I was tired and hungry. Despite all this we didn't feel we were in a danger zone. Most people just minded their own business, and no one tried to steal anything or con us. However, we had some salesman trying to sell us (and everyone else) a massage device.

Marduk kindly took the trouble to return us back to Ika's place-temporary home sweet temporary home. And as I found out when I took off my shirt, I smelled worse than two rotten eggs put together.

Day 11: Another show. This time it was at a Comic's Festival in Ciputra Mall, one of the biggest malls in Jakarta. It was a really a strange place for a performance; then again, this whole tour has been crazy. We had a reception of sweet cakes and some noodle-soup dish that was delicious! We then had some comic-related stuff with the curators, artists, management personel and so forth giving a speech. It was pretty much an indie event, no corporate sponsors, nothing.

There was an opening band called SINGLET that was an Indonesian rock band with all sorts of costumes. The vocalist was eccentric and agile and reminded me of the late Malaysian pop star Sudirman. I thought they were cool-unpretentious, energetic and entertaining.

We had Steve up, and this time I did the translations. I embarrassed myself speaking in Bahasa (I'm very bad at it) and apologized profusely for any mis-

PUNK ROCK COMMUNAL MEAL

takes. Oh well. His set was pretty average, probably because of the surroundings and the environment.

It was then late in the evening and we had to make our way to another show. This time it was at the Ruang Rupa Collective about 20 minutes by taxi. Ruang Rupa is an art collective that have a space and are involved in various projects, mainly within the visual-art scope.

The show started at about 8pm with a resident hip-hop group, ANGKATAN UDARA, opening. I thoroughly enjoyed their set as it was something that had a great drive and I could make out some lyrics that addressed social problems. No cheesy Snoop Dog stuff there.

We then had WHITE SHOES AND THE COUPLES COMPANY who played a tight set of indie-pop. By then I was hungry and trying to balance my attention between the band and the fried rice vendors. I ended up having the fried rice while listening to the band. I have not heard DIY indie for quite some time.

It was poetry reading after that. We had some kids go up to recite their original works- some boring, some pretty interesting. Or maybe that's because I didn't understand half of what they were saying.

I should really brush up on my Malay.

Steve played last, as expected. And, as expected, there was an enthusiastic reception and response. He played one of his better sets of the tour here, dishing out material from his *1 Shot at Freedom* and latest *Straits Of Gilbraltar* release.

There was the usual get together after the show and I ate more fried rice. Also, I had some of the best tehbotol (sweet chilled bottled tea) on tour. Steve had an interview with Ika's sister that took one hour! Who does one hour interviews anyway?

Day 12: This was to be the last *active* day on tour. In the late morning we headed down again to the Tempequality Kolektif place. Apparently Steve and the guys in Tempequality had a mutual agreement to collaborate on a song. We got there early, and while they jammed, I slept. Within an hour they were ready to record on some computer equipment for a live recording. However, I didn't see an amazing amount of cables like I always do when I go into a studio.

They used guitar, tablas, and sang on a song about the state and the military, with references to former Indonesian president Suharto and an Australian minister guy named Hughes. It turned out pretty good-anthemic, unconventional punk rock!

Midway through the set, Marduk and I sneaked off to check our email at a *Warnet* (*Warung Internet*, Indonesian for Internet Booth). They always think of cool names don't they? We snuck on the trait to get where were headed.

When the train arrived I ignored it, because it was packed to death, with everyone's faces and asses sticking out, and something close to an army of 100 kids sitting *on top* of the trains, assuming Marduk would board the next one.

Instead, he boarded it and told me to get on. The train had already started moving by then so I decided to board it anyway, at the same time wondering if Marduk was crazy. As I jumped in, landing each foot on someone else's and something else, I clinged on to the railings for my dear life. And yes, my ass stuck out into the open too.

Eventually, we checked our email and returned to the Tempequality Kolektif where Steve and co. were waiting. Within an hour we were back on the train and on the way to Virgin Pub for Steve's last show which was also a Ramones tribute gig, with 22 bands!! The entry was Rp 5000 which I could easily afford-about a $1 for a 22 band show in a pub-but was ushered in for free anyway. Somehow being tour coordinator has its perks.

And well, it was a Ramones tribute. What else do you expect? Everyone played Ramones' covers and a few originals. Guess what I did?

That's right. I dozed off.

I woke up, went outside, saw a fried rice vendor, became his first customer and had the best meal of my life. Then I went back into the pub. Guess what I did this time?

That's right. I dozed off again.

Day 13: The last day in Indonesia. Steve had an evening flight while I was cursed with a morning one. So I bade my farewells to everyone, got directions from a friend, and made my way to the airport.

The drama didn't end at the airport like I wished it would.

As soon as I got there I realized there was n Rp 100, 000 airport tax which I had to pay. I had close to nothing in my wallet and only had access to my bank account in Singapore. But, I had to pay the tax anyway!

The *Valuair* receptionist told me to ask the station manager, who in turn told me to report to the officer in charge. I felt like a football, being kicked around the airport. They did everything except solve my problem, until they suggested me borrowing money from a fellow passenger.

Good idea. Though it felt a little stupid. I failed at my first attempt but got a kind Malay guy to lend me Rp 100, 000 to offset that fucking tax.

I thanked him and before long I boarded the plane. He looked at me and asked if this airline is the one with the karaoke. I asked if he meant the singing stewardesses. He nodded. We both laughed.

We flew to Changi Airport, and I looked like a mutant turtle with two haversacks and two boxes. Went to the ATM, returned the dud his $20 and bade farewell.

Guess what happened when I passed through the customs of the strictest and best airport in the world?

Nothing.

The perfect ending to a crazy tour. Thus far, I have missed the food, the coffee, the nice people, the laid back lifestyle, and the cute girls. So that means I have to come back again someday.

Thanks to everyone involved in the tour: Ika, Pam and Monika, Mas Aji and Ari Ernesto for putting us up, Marduk, Anggi, Edo, Nune, Ina, Gofar, Gita, Ferdian, Sayap Imaji, Aca, Mandra, Ari Bowkore, Alex, Deden, Irfan and Ari Ernesto especially for showing us around and being my Anarcho, Bastard, Crusties session companion, the show organizers from Rontax Studio, Tobucil, the Balkot Collective, the Babakan Siliwangi show people, the Dago Pojok arts fest people, Shaun, Amy, Morgan, Ruang Rupa, Beng Rahadian the comics guy, Food Not Bombs Bandung, the RAMONES Tribute show organizer whoever he/she is, Tempequality Kolektif, MARJINAL, and DISLIKE. I am sure I missed out many names, I'm sorry I'm bad with remembering names! I thank anyone and everyone whom I had at least a conversation with for giving me a perspective and an additional lesson in life.

Extra Thanks to STEVE TOWSON and Ness for the free flight, friendship, and trust to do this tour. To find out more about STEVE TOWSON, visit www.stevetowson.com

Planning to tour?

Here are some people you should contact in South East Asia with regards to tours here. The people listed have been involved one way or another in SE Asian DIY touring. Note that this list is non-exhaustive and hopefully you will see more names elsewhere.

SINGAPORE: Shaiful, *Zerox* (that's me! Fucked up stinky tour organizer trashkore@yahoo.com); Seelan (drummer of FALLEN WORLD and many other bands, loves to do shows, resourceful and committed, fallen_world@hotmail.com); Faisal, Homegrown Records (runs a record label and willing to help bands if time permits, badmongo74@hotmail.com); Jasman *Minus* (was a great help in the WOJCZECH/G:LAS tour, and now helping with POWER OF IDEA and other Japanese bands' upcoming tours, minusriot@yahoo.com.sg); MY PRECIOUS (active band with members also active in shirt printing and setting up shows, an integral pillar of *Basement Bash*, one of the better DIY shows in Singapore scene history, myprecious_sg@yahoo.com); THRASH STEADY SYNDICATE (advocates of DIY hardcore, organized financially and sound, members of SECRET 7, JAHILIA, and RECOVER-enough said! thrashsteadysyndicate@hotmail.com).

MALAYSIA: Kamal Ishak (tour coordinator for the WOJCZECH/G:LAS tour, done a few shows, and runs Dratsab Recs/Distro, kamal_ishak@hotmail.com); Wan Hazril (member of

NYI BLORONG and SELF MADE GOD, and also runs Cactus Distro/Recs, cactusdistro@yahoo.com); Nur Azri aka Buji (also a member of NYI BLORONG and SELF MADE GOD, was an important part of the COHOL-TIALA/GAUGE MEANS NOTHING/STEVE TOWSON Singapore-Malaysia tour, nyiblorong_hc@yahoo.com); Sham (vocals in SELF MADE GOD, runs a great tape label Uglysmokers Recs, close to the NYI BLORONG guys, and very resourceful! uglysmokecore@hotmail.com); Ahmad ASAS (can set up DIY shows for touring bands and runs a label-distro, asas@excite.com)

BORNEO: Avail Records (located in Sabah, can arrange a show for you! Don't know about the rest of Borneo (Sarawak/Brunei) but you can be assured of a show in Sabah! iem_avail@yahoo.com or rubmybreast@yahoo.com); Papakerma Distro (was an asset in the COHOL/TIALA/GMN/STEVE TOWSON tour and an active distro-label as well, http://papakerma.cjb.net); Joe Kidd (veteran punk rocker, has helped countless bands on tour, dungboy@kerbau.com, and www.ricecooker.kerbau.com, which is an informative site on the Malaysian and international HC punk scene)

THAILAND: Chris Luppi (New Yorker who moved to Bangkok will set up shows for anyone and also runs Elephant Eye Records/Distro, wreackageasia@hotmail.com and www.elephanteyerecords.com); Yos (a very active local scenester and speaks English, was a great help when I was in Bangkok, introduced me to nice people and also acted as a guide and translator, leesic@hotmail.com); Stirling (plays in poppy, rocky band EASTBOUND DOWNERS, has been involved in countless shows in Bangkok, and fluent in English and Thai, nagatheremin@yahoo.com); Sophie (American punk rocker(!), is based further up north of Thailand in Chiangma, and can set up shows, ironthorn@hotmail.com).

PHILIPPINES: Emmanuel Jasmin (runs *Resist To Exist* zine, is active in all aspects of the scene, and my longest running contact in the Philippines, emmanuel_jasmin@yahoo.com, note, new email address!); Boi (scene veteran, screams in AGGRESSIVE DOG ATTACK and is involved in a bit of social work too, boibaboi@yahoo.com).

INDONESIA: Ari Ernesto (member of DOMESTIK DOKTRIN and can set up shows, based in the city of Bandung, ernestokore55@bdg.centrin.net.id); Vantiani (aka Ika, runs Peniti Pink Distro, based in Jakarta, she has contacts and could possibly get you a place to stay, viciousvagina@yahoo.com)

News and updates from South East Asia!

SINGAPORE: *The Electric News* is the latest HC punk DIY zine from Singapore. A great debut issue and a good read (**lady-e@theelectricyouth.tk**). WWW.LIONCITYDIY.COM is currently enjoying a healthy run of good shows. Due to positive, collective efforts amongst those involved, as well as the right attitudes, the past three shows have had very encouraging responses. REASONS TO REACT, CELEBRATING OUR EXISTENCE (joint effort with Thrash Steady Syndicate) and IN UNISON (joint effort with the band ELEGY FOR EULISZA) all had visiting bands from the region and healthy turnouts. Food Not Bombs Singapore just formed and had its little debut at the IN UNISON show. I will post more info soon as I have a contact address, sorry. sXeTan Collective, in collaboration with Karatecore Records of Malaysia has just released the *Betercore* CD (Dutch youth-crust). Also check out *sXetan* zine. The guy behind it all is also a vegetarian, sXe skinhead-a rare breed (**xdinsxetanx@hotmail.com** or write to: Syahrudin, Blk 116, Potong Pasir Ave 1, #03-918, Singapore 350116, SINGAPORE); FALLEN WORLD promo 2004 is out and I can tell you honestly that its one of the best demos in my collection-blast-beat, grindcore with traces of youth-crew. They have three other demos out (**fallen_world@hotmail.com**); *Crooked* zine is the creation of Seelan from FALLEN WORLD and WWW.LIONCITYDIY.COM, a great first issue with interviews and opinions. For some reason he didn't list his postal address so email him for one (**fallen_world@hotmail.com**)

MALAYSIA: As mentioned above, Karatecore Records has a release with Singapore's sXeTan Records of the *BETERCORE* discography CD-wholesalers get in touch! (Suhaizan aka Bob, 45-04-04 Pangsamurni Titiwangsa, Keramat Jaya 2, 54000 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA); *War Of Words* is a promising zine out of Malaysia, non-cliché content, and very honest from my point of view (Spinningbrain@hotmail.com or Mohd Fadzil Mat Nor, B2 Gerai Mdl, Bandar Bahru 27200 Kuala Lipis, Pahang, MALAYSIA); Do Not Consume Records is back from the dead! They will reissue the incomplete discography of Singapore punk veterans OPPOSITION PARTY! Also more reissues of South East Asian bands circa late 80s–mid 90s! (dnc_collective@yahoo.com)

Life On The Edge and Inferior 666 Records has just released ALL THESE WHILE (Malaysian pisscore) and HIGHSCORE (German HC) on CD (sangsara_recs@yahoo.com or Sangsara Records, PO Box 13288, 50806 Kuala Lumpur, MALAYSIA); *Bonds Of Old School* is an old-school, hardcore, compilation CD released by various labels (United Front Recs, Dratsab Recs, Tragis Recs, Nervous Recs, Youthcrime, and Kids Like Me Records), featuring LAST MINUTE, CHANNEL X, NOSTALGIA, SECOND COMBAT and more (dratsabrecords@hotmail.com or Kamal Ishak, No. 2a Jln Kg Chachar, Kuala Jempol, 72100 Bahau, N. Sembilan, West MALAYSIA).

THAILAND: Not too much to report from Thailand at all, except that the postal address of www.ELEPHANTEYERECORDS.com will be changing soon as Chris is moving to another town. I encourage those who have at least a remote interest in the scene there to communicate with him (wreckageasia@hotmail.com)

THE PHILIPPINES: **BYSTORM and SAUNA split CD is out now, second release by the Takefour collective-metallic hardcore from both bands, professionally made CD, and pro printed colored covers-P200 (local) US$6 (Asia) US$7 (world). FEUD's *Battling Bastard Of Freedom* CD is out, from local sXe heroes and one of the most controversial bands in the Philippines for being sXe. People always criticize their beliefs and commitment, but don't rely on the rumors as they thrash hard! Professionally made CD with pro printed covers-P200 (local) US$6 (Asia) US$7 (World). Labels and distributors get in touch for possible trades and correspondence (getintouchxxx@yahoo.com or www.takefourcollective.cjb.net or emman delusion_of_terror@grindcore.net or emmanuelj@mail.com)**

INDONESIA: MARJINAL is a band everyone should take a listen to-anthemic, anti-military (heck that was their former band name), rockish punk. While they sing in Bahasa Indonesia, a few of them have a fair grasp of English. Members from the Tempequality Kolektif (**tempequality@hotmail.com** or **tempequality@doityourself.com** or Tempequality, PO Box 7735, JKS, LA Jakarta 12077 INDONESIA). Teriak Records mainly reissues tapes of international DIY HC/punk/grind (**terbujurkaku@hotmail.com** or **www.geocities.com/uproarscene** or Ari Bowkore, Jl. Pitara Rt 05/14 No. 49, Depok 16436, INDONESIA). *XLAPUKX* is a sXe HC zine out of Bandung, done in Bahasa Indonesia (**crossxedge@hotmail.com** or Deden, Jl. Kapur, No 10 B, Bandung 40212, Jawa Barat, INDONESIA). Peniti Pink Distro, a great place to chill out, is a distro., infoshop, and a home. I stayed there while I was in Jakarta. Email Ika (aka Vantiani) to say hello (**viciousvagina@yahoo.com**).

I hope after this, people are inspired to come over to check out the scene and culture here in South East Asia. Feel free to ask any questions.

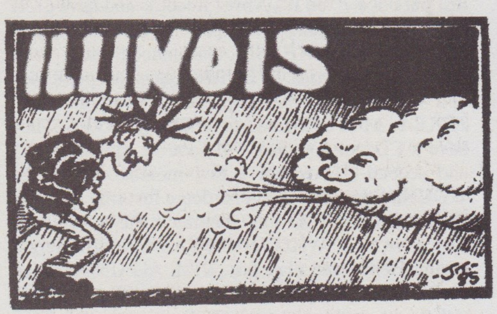
By the time you read this, the final issue of *ZEROX* will be out. It's issue #10 and has interviews with Stonehenge Records, DEMOCRAZY, DEAD CHRETIENS, THE ORORKU EDGE, AMIR MUHAMMAD, and KALASHNIKOV. Reports on South East Asian touring (all taken from my MRR submissions), plenty of sensitive opinions and more. Be prepared to wait at least a month for trades. Individually it will cost $4 / Euro 3ppd, and wholesalers get in touch. Those in the Asia/Oceania region should get in touch for different prices.

Also, I will start *Prohibited Newsletter* next year. Get in touch for ad rates. It will be a freesheet. *NOTICE*: due to rising costs everywhere I encourage using my postal address only when sending items (tapes, zines, etc). Try to send an email if you just want to make a query or start an e-conversation. However if all you have is paper and pen (ie: prisoners, the really poor folks with no Internet access, etc) I understand completely. I love communicating with people, though lately I've been busy. Maybe I'm getting too old. Ha-ha.

I know this sounds fucking pathetic, but I love snail mail a million times more than email. However, I just can't afford to spend money on postage every few days anymore. Sorry.

As usual send all mail to:
Shaiful
Blk 554 Bedok North St 3, #08-241,
Singapore 460554,
SINGAPORE
trashkore@yahoo.com

A-Hoy-Hoy from Carbondale-a small college town in southern Illinois with a pretty unknown/underrated punk scene. There's no way we can cover the history of the scene here without fucking something up, so we will focus on the past few years with a few bits of history here and there.



The scene in this town pretty much revolves around Lost Cross, a punk house established around 1985 or so. The stories as to exactly who started the house, and when it began, are pretty conflicted. Those were some drunken days. Shows started at the house around the late 80s, back when there were several venues that had punk shows: House of Voodew, Club Romex, The Hangar 9, 611 Pizza, and what is now the gay bar Upside Downtown. NAKED RAYGUN, BLACK FLAG, RAPEMAN, NIRVANA, NOFX, and THE OFFSPRING, all rolled through one of these venues at some point or another.

Lost Cross has been passed from generation to generation by the grace of the world's most understanding landlord. There is no lease but an understanding between him and the local residents. It's because of this co-operative mentality that Lost Cross has lasted nearly 20 years now. It is where many of the local bands practice and the main house for shows and all-ages venue in Carbondale. Generally there is at least a show a month there, with the frequency depending on how hard the cops are coming down on us. Recently, there has been some pretty ripping shows at the house: MOTO, THE KRUNCHIES, TULSA, FOURTH ROTOR, TERMINUS VICTOR, VEE DEE, RAISE THE RED LANTERN, and RIVETHEAD. And In the not-so distant past we've had: THE TRAITORS, OBLIVION, THE MASHERS, APOCALYPSE HOBOKEN, SLUDGEWORTH, V. REVERSE, THE HUNTINGTONS, MIDTOWN, SIN ORDEN, THE HYSTERICS, and NO EMPATHY come through. The cops have been pretty hard on the house lately, buts it comes with the territory. Booking for Lost Cross is pretty laid back; just send an email to Ray or Brino at lcmcbooking@hotmail.com.

Outside of Lost Cross, there is a lack of all-ages venues in the area. Nightmare HQ used to carry the bulk of the all-ages hardcore shows, but they had to stop around 2002. They had some killer shows with BIBLE OF THE DEVIL, RISE AGAINST, and even MU330, for some strange reason. There has been a couple of shows at the local IMC space-GHOST MICE played a little while back-but most of the all-ages shows happen in neighboring towns. Herrin Teen Town has been home to some a few great hardcore shows. THE HAUNTED LIFE, ILLUMINATI, PLAN OF ATTACK, THE KILLER, and STEP ON IT have all been played there. Thanks to the guys from 99 STABWOUNDS, and the younger kids like Herrin Josh and John McCowen the hardcore scene around the area is going strong. Occasionally people will rent the Murphyboro Civic Center for all-ages shows, but it's getting harder to draw kids out there. The last large show out there was the GROOVIE GHOULIES with the EPOXIES a while back.

When it comes to bands around town, there's a pretty good mix. You have THE COPYRIGHTS, who just put out a 7" on It's Alive! Records and have a CD on Insubordination. They play some really great SCREECHING WEASEL influenced punk with smart, positive lyrics. IT BURNS plays fast punk rock and roll that's been compared to everyone from ZEKE to MOTORHEAD to THE DWARVES. They have a CD out now and will soon be releasing a 7" and second CD within a few months. 99 STABWOUNDS are the current hardcore favorites in town. They released a CD this summer right before their east coast tour. WHITEHURST comes from neighboring Herrin and play fast, RISE AGAINST styled hardcore. It's really hard to believe that those kids are either in or just out of high school. THE HANGAROUNDS play the kind of pop-punk that sounds more like THE RAMONES and THE RIVERDALES than anything else. Their CD should be out soon as well. And of course, you can't forget THE BOURBON KNIGHTS. These guys are the elder statesmen of the scene-a handful of which created the original Carbondale punk scene of the 80s. With around 10 members (the lineup is constantly changing), they play POGUES influenced folk-punk. However, they don't play the boring FLOGGING MOLLY/TOSSERS kind of stuff. Instead, throw in some early Chicago punk influences, some JOHNNY CASH, a little TOM WAITS, and you get a better idea. These guys have an album out and another on the way.

Some new bands that have been popping up lately: THE ACCELERATORS (ex-HOLIDAYS, current IT BURNS and HANGAROUNDS) are playing DUANE PETERS styled street punk and just put out a CD; PANIC DISORDER plays early 80s American punk and has members of IT BURNS and the far-too-short-lived, all-girl hardcore band THE GOODNIGHTMARES, who put out a posthumous CD-EP; THE BROKEN BOYS are a power pop trio with influences like THE EXPLODING HEARTS and THE REPLACEMENTS; THE SPEEDING TICKETS is a group of Japanese students who are studying at the college in Carbondale, and started a Green Day sounding punk band; HONEY MUSTARD is another group of Japanese punks who were inspired by THE SPEEDING TICKETS and started a RANCID/TRANSPLANTS sounding group.

The past few years saw the break ups of several Carbondale bands. MOLOKO PLUS broke up in 2002 after they had to change their name to THE LAST LAUGH. Those guys went on to do THE COPYRIGHTS and LIKE NO OTHER and each have released a couple of CDs. BIG FAT NOTHING broke up in 2002, but their album was released this year. Ska-punks The BORO CITY ROLLERS broke up in 2001. THE HOLIDAYS, whose lead singer was the only man brave enough to roll around naked on basement floor of Lost Cross, broke up after releasing a tape and a CD of great street punk. The new-wave glam punks EYECANDY broke up recently, on the night of their CD release show. Both THIS GUY and THE NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCE have broken up, leaving the Carbondale HC scene kind of short. THE SCRUTINEERS played some great mod/garage rock for a couple of years, but never released anything. They broke up because their drummer had to move to Florida to work for NASA as a rocket scientist.

On the flipside to that, there've been a slew of reunion shows, and bands getting back together. Early 90s garage rockers ACTION MAN got back together and weaseled their way into a frat bar for their reunion show. The WAXDOLLS have gotten back together for a few benefit shows here and there. The CRUCES did a reunion show as well. Yet, the most permanent of the latest reunions has been THE DAMMIT BOYS, who reformed with Tim, the drummer for sludge-punks THE HATEFUL DEAD, on drums. THE HATEFUL DEAD just finished their second full length with Scott Picco (of former Carbondale indie rockers BEAR CLAW).

When it comes to indie rock (which I know MRR isn't really about, but we have a tight scene and try to support our own) you have PAVEMENT/AFGHAN WHIGS sounding THE PLUS, who have a couple of albums to their name, and VIVA VENDETTA, who came out of the ashes of math rockers THE GODDAMN JETS. Marty from THE PLUS also co-runs a great indie rock label called Wooden Man Records. Occasionally there are all-ages shows at The Vehicle House (the indie rock house in town), but those are pretty infrequent. BEAR CLAW and THE EMILY SHRINE both thought it would be better to move from here to Chicago. Which makes sense because the indie rock scene in this town is pretty much nonexistent.

One of the things that kind of sucks is the lack of zines in this town. Over the years we had *Thrashers Digest*, *Ointment*, and *Grandpa's Lap*, but recently there has not been many. The kids in The HANGAROUNDS camp occasionally still put out *Go Mental!*, but besides that there is pretty much nothing. However, Rosetta Books, the independently owned bookstore/video store that carries all the shit that Barnes and Nobles to afraid to and that Blockbuster will not, is still around. It's the only place in town where you can pick up music zines, political zines, and things of that nature.

And I know it's not that cool to talk about the bar scene, but its pretty thriving here. The punks in town have pretty much infiltrated the 19+ bar circuit, and book great shows all the time. THE EPOXIES, THE MANGES, SHARK PANTS, COMMON RIDER, THE METHADONES, THE LAWRENCE ARMS, THE GHOST, TEEN IDOLS, MUMMY THE PEEPSHOW, THE DUTCHMEN, TOYS THAT KILL, THE PHENOMS, and THE REPOS have all played the bars in the past couple of years. And trust me, we try our hardest to make sure the kids can get in or at least are able to hear the music.

When it comes to radio in southern Illinois, there is not much to chose from that is not Country or Classic Rock. Luckily in Carbondale there are two good radio stations WDBX, the community radio station, and WIDB the college radio station. Both these stations have shows that spin punk rock, both local and national.

In more current news, the folks at Lost Cross and Criminal IQ Records are currently putting on a festival for November, Crimefest, that will bring together Chicago's trashiest and Carbondale's scummiest: MOTO, VEE DEE, THE KRUNCHIES, and THE FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS. MANACONDA and SHOTBAKER will also be playing. It's going to be two days of drunken punk rock mayhem. THE COPYRIGHTS just finished up a two-week, east coast tour with the enlisted help of Aaron from Chicago's THE RUSHMORES on drums. Also VIVA VENDETTA has been playing around the midwest pretty steadily since they got together.

So that's all there really is to say about the Carbondale punk scene right now. I'm sure I've missed something somewhere, but fuck it, that can wait until next time. But until then keep in touch with us by going to the Lost Cross website (http://www.geocities.com/bollman1). It's a good resource for local bands links, and there is a good, old-fashioned, shit-talking message board to post on. Goodbye, and SOCIAL!!! - Ray Suburbia

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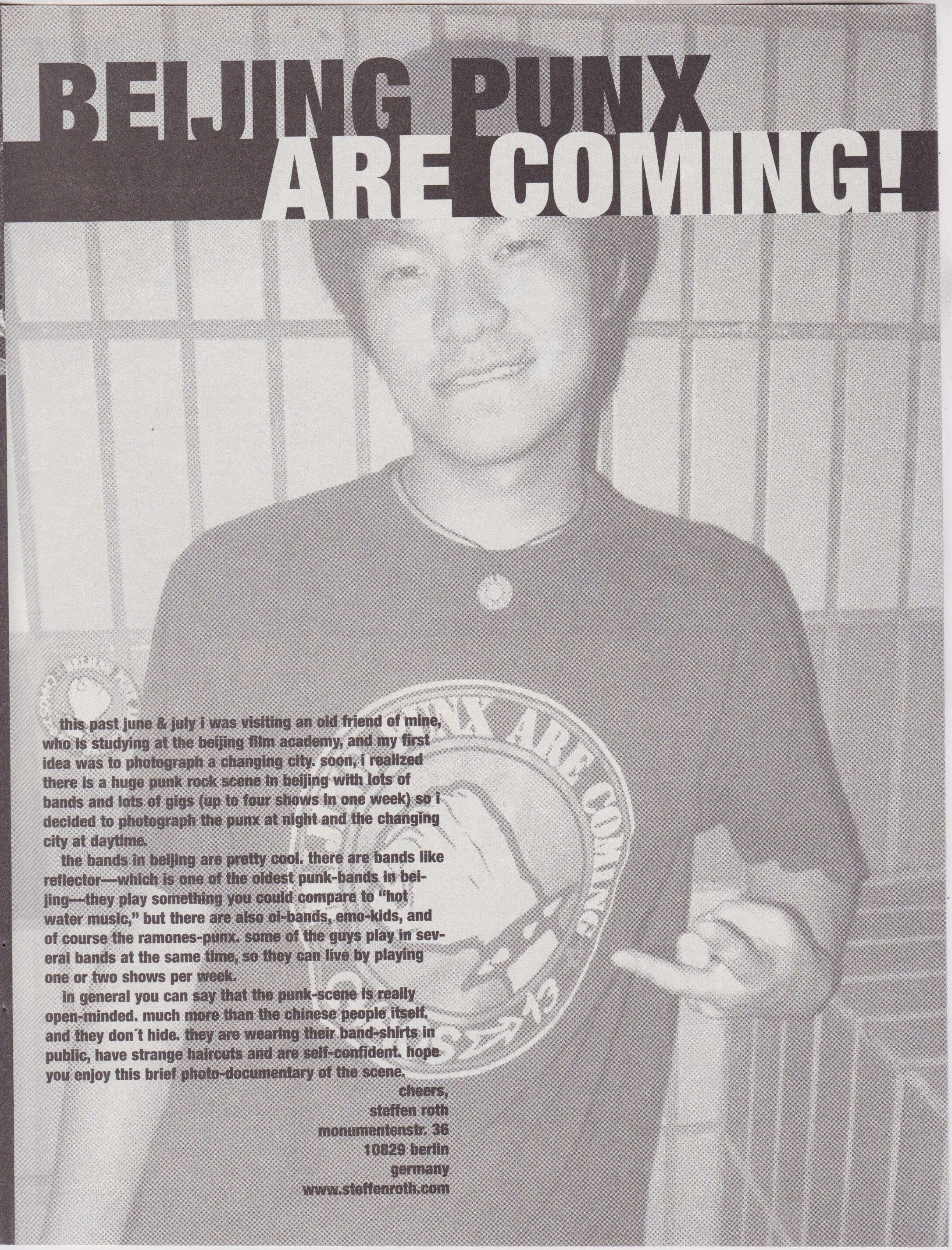

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this past june & july i was visiting an old friend of mine, who is studying at the beijing film academy, and my first idea was to photograph a changing city. soon, i realized there is a huge punk rock scene in beijing with lots of bands and lots of gigs (up to four shows in one week) so i decided to photograph the punx at night and the changing city at daytime.

the bands in beijing are pretty cool. there are bands like reflector—which is one of the oldest punk-bands in beijing—they play something you could compare to "hot water music," but there are also oi-bands, emo-kids, and of course the ramones-punx. some of the guys play in several bands at the same time, so they can live by playing one or two shows per week.

in general you can say that the punk-scene is really open-minded. much more than the chinese people itself. and they don´t hide. they are wearing their band-shirts in public, have strange haircuts and are self-confident. hope you enjoy this brief photo-documentary of the scene.

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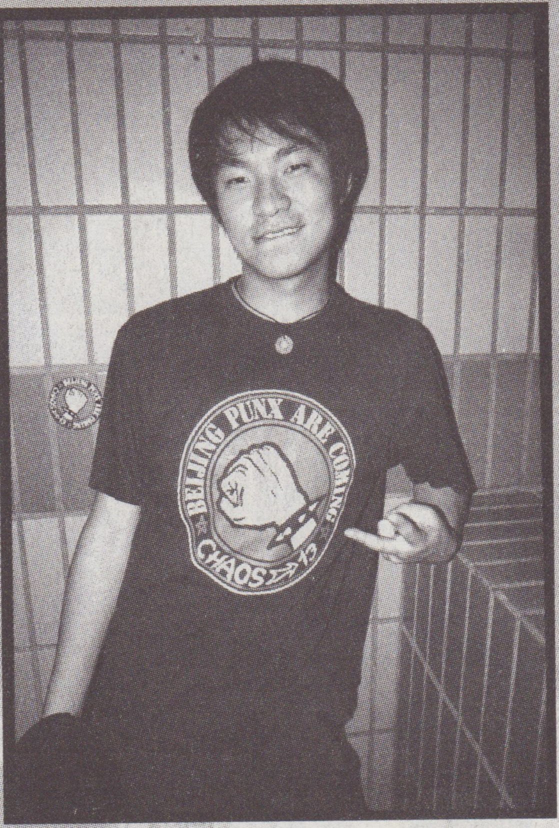
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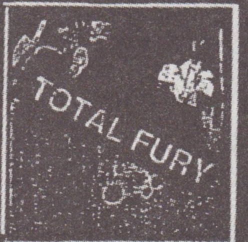

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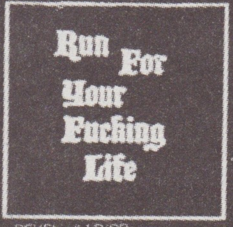

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A SHORT TRIBUTE TO GREG SHAW

By Shane White

.....FUCK!!!! That was a *really* bad weekend!!!! We lost two heavies, just like *that*!!! John Peel and Greg Shaw! Sheesh!!! It just goes to show you that life is uncertain and any of us can just check out at any given minute. A lot of heroes and heavies have turned into worm food in the last couple of years and there's plenty more to come!!!! Everybody's getting older now, some of us *a lot older*!!!!! That rock'n'roll life-style that so many of us were sworn into when we were very young is finally catching up to us (that is, those of us who haven't already committed suicide or had a fatal overdose when were young and in our prime)! So many of these motherfuckers are barely making it into their fifties. It makes you kinda nervous.......it makes you want to go to the *doctor*!!!!! Too late......for most of us, the damage is already done!!!!

.....Some of these heroes and heavies recent deaths have bummed me out proper because sometimes I forget we are mortal beings and I thought that they would live *forever*!!! There are others that have kicked the bucket that I can give a rats ass about, SO THERE!!! But I'll have to say that the passing of John Peel And Greg Shaw *really* hit home. Especially the Shaw-man. When Mike Thorn asked me if I would write a piece on how much I really loved this particular heavy amongst heavies, I was indeed honored and agreed to give him one thousand words by Friday. I think I just rattled off about two hundred words already.......eight hundred to go!!!!

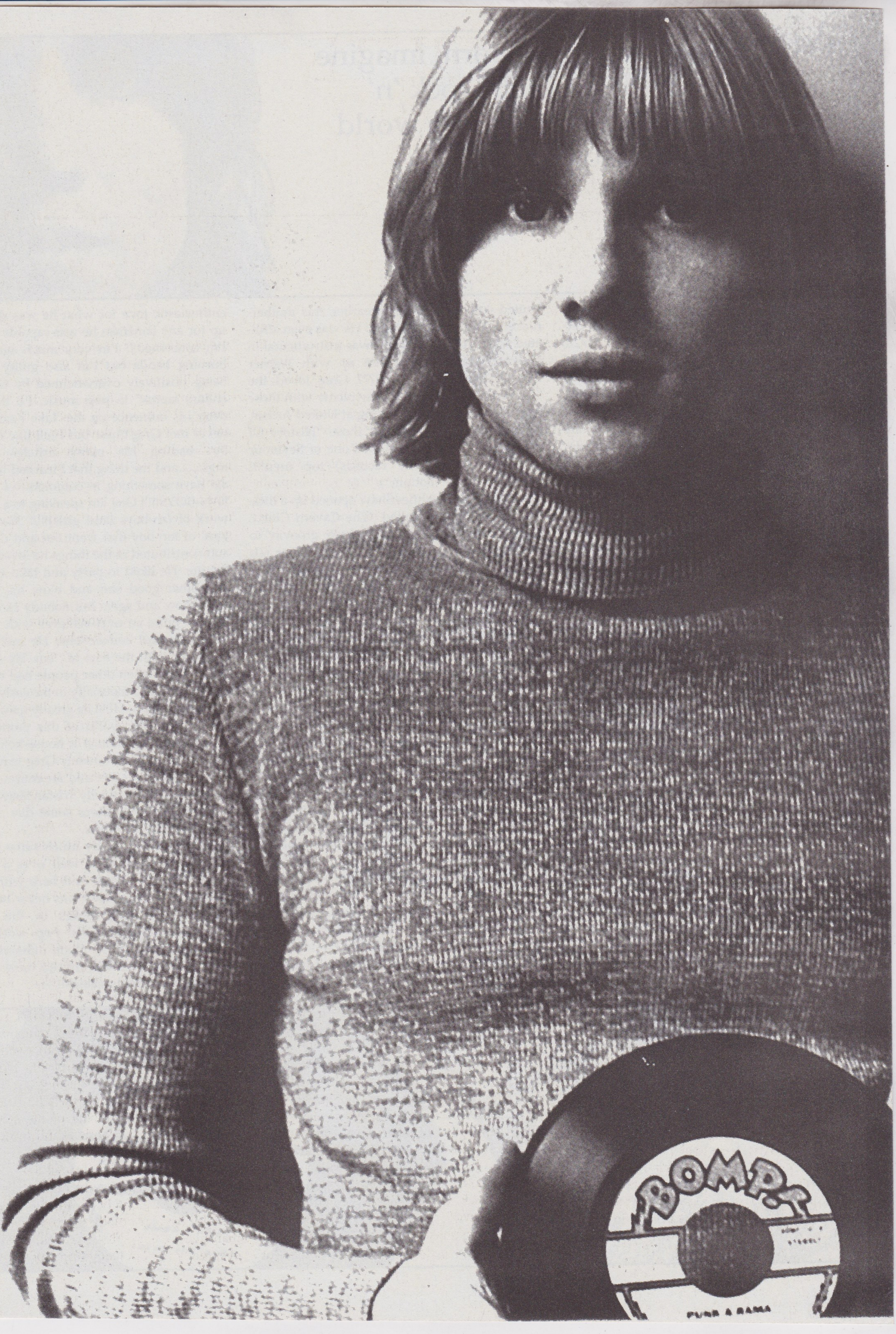
.......I guess this would be a good time to explain exactly who Greg Shaw was and why he was so important to the world of insane rock'n'roll fandom. I'm sure there's a lot of really young *MRR* readers who are totally unaware of this man's existence, and how he's linked to everything that most of us do or dig in independent rock'n'roll circles. I think it's safe to say that you wouldn't even be holding an issue of *MRR* this very minute and reading this pathetic tribute/obituary if it wasn't for Mr. Shaw! And I also think it's probably safe to say that Tim Yohannan (rest his soul) would agree with me!!!! Hell, Tim went to high-school with Lenny Kaye (Patti Smith Group/Nuggets Comp) and they both wore their hair long, smoked grass and listened to the YARDBIRDS together......and Lenny Kaye is majorly linked to Greg Shaw in many ways. So there you go, there is a *MRR*/Shaw connection!!!! I'll explain this later, maybe......!!!!

....Greg Shaw was born in 1949 in San Francisco, California and died on October 19th 2004 in Los Angeles, California of a heart attack. I would have to say that your average rock'n'roll life span is about 50 to 55 years and Greg hit the mark right on the head, checking out at a perfect 55 years of age!!! He had a close call back in '98 when his kidney went limp....he actually underwent a kidney transplant a year later and lived to tell about it!!!!! So it seems that his health had been bad for quite some time now.

......I never knew Mr. Shaw personally, so I can only talk about him from a fan's point of view, therefore I might not be the best person to write about the subject.......but on the other hand *I just might be* the best person to write about this motherfucker because after all, Greg Shaw himself was nothing more than a FAN-BOY!!!! His whole career in the arts is due to the fact that he worshipped rock'n'roll and the crazy culture that went with it!!!! Shaw was no "band member" up on the stage flinging an electric guitar and parking his cock in a teenage groupie's mouth after the show......he was an enthusiastic fan in the audience!!!!! And this enthusiastic fan-boy marked a nitch in history for himself by putting all his time and energy into being the ultimate fan-boy (being the ultimate also meant having the ultimate record collection, Greg had exceptionally good taste in music and was well schooled in "all types", such as doo-wop, blues, rockabilly, etc)!!!

.... "Do-it-yourself" rock journalism starts with Greg Shaw!!!! He was a rock 'n' roll and science fiction geek in his childhood and produced "fanzines" of all sorts in his teens. Being young in the late 60s and living in the Bay Area kept him a well-connected dude!!! In 1966 he did a dinky little local music zine called *Mojo-Navigator Rock'n'Roll News* that was only a couple pages of jive. It looked just as crude as the first issue of *Sniffin' Glue* in England exactly ten years later, but grew in size and quality real quick.....kinda becoming legendary, and influencing a butt-load of other zines and publications, such as *Rolling Stone*, etc......!!! Shaw also wrote for other people's rags as well, like the *New York Press*.....and he was the west coast editor for *Creem* in the early 70s. Come to think of it, he also played a pretty heavy roll in another early 70s fanzine called *Phonograph Record Magazine*, which got pretty big for a while. But the big daddy that Mr. Shaw is known for is a little rag he started in 1970 called *Who Put The Bomp*!!!!!! Actually, the early issues each had a different name from an old rock'n'roll song.......but eventually *Who Put The Bomp* stuck and then years on down the line it was shortened to just *Bomp!*, plain and simple!!!! Old issues of *Bomp*! are like rock'n'roll gospels. Shaw was such a nerd about music and had an amazing record collection and had so much incredible insight that it made *Bomp!* a record geek's wet dream!!!!! Especially when "punk" came into the picture. *Bomp!* did a brilliant job of documenting the movement from the very beginning of it's creation to the very end of its' "first wave." The back issues read like Bibles of "who's who" and "what's what" in the most pain-staking kind of "fan-boy" way. I personally still use old issues of "Bomp!" as points of reference to all sorts of things regarding rock'n'roll or punk or power-pop and such.....Shaw never covered "ska", but then again, that ain't rock 'n' roll!!!! I remember buying my first issue of *Bomp*! at Rainbow Records in Silver Lake, Los Angeles.....this was about 1981......it was in a box of used rock magazines at a quarter a piece.....it was the one with Brian Wilson on the cover (I also pulled out issue #2 of *Radio-Free Hollywood*, but that's another story)!!!! The next issue of *Bomp*! that I bought was the one that really hit home.....it was the one with Johnny Rotten on the cover. I bought it second hand at Camp Records in Eagle Rock in yet another box of used rock zines. The "A thru Z" lists of punk singles used to get my dick hard.....and this is when I was just a kid!!!! But the issue that changed my life was the "Power-Pop" edition that I bought for a buck at Neil's Records in Glendale in about '86. This is where I learned about the likes of the RASPBERRIES (early '70's Ohio based band with strong roots in BEACH BOYS, BEATLES and HOLLIES), one of my all time favorite god-head bands!!!!!! I definitely *learned* from back issues of *Bomp*! magazine.....no doubt about it!!!!! Years later I too would start a fanzine of my own and I would "borrow" all kinds of shit from *Bomp*!. I was truly schooled (like so many others) on some of the best, and I'm grateful!!!

..... *Bomp*! also became a record label in 1974 with the release of a FLAMIN' GROOVIES single (also Bay Area motherfuckers *and* they were managed by Greg Shaw as well)!!!!!! The label eventually put out really heavy power-pop and


B.O.M.P.!
PUNK A RAMA

If Greg Shaw was never born, imagine how different things in the rock 'n' roll/punk/garage/power pop world would have turned out?????

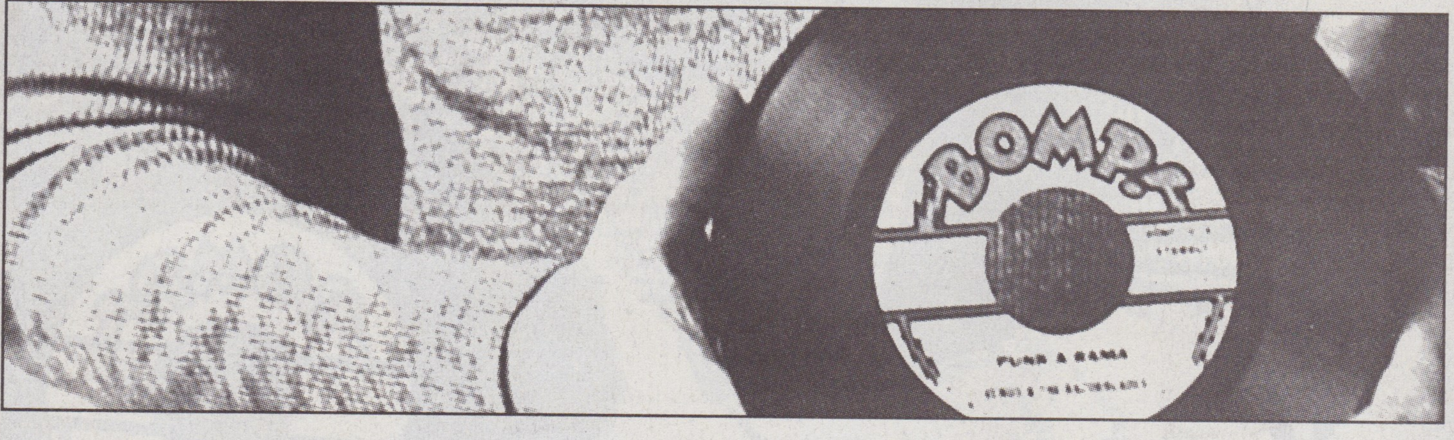
punk releases that are now considered classic pieces of dick-cheese. Even the early Bomp! catalog is vast with releases by the likes of 20/20, WILLIE ALEXANDER AND THE BOOM BOOM BAND, THE BOYFRIENDS, THE ZEROS, THE WEIRDOS, TAXI BOYS, JOSIE COTTON, THE SHOES and all those STIV BATORS solo records. Greg Shaw was also the man responsible for all those *Pebble*s compilations of old 60s garage records that were all taken from his own personal record collection......as well as the "High's In The Mid-Sixties" series!!! Basically, the *Pebbles* comps are bootlegs that are meant to be the obscure continuation to Lenny Kaye's classic *Nuggets* comp of "not-so-obscure" 60s garage classics all put together in one collection in the early 70s that was to influence the soon-to-be punk rockers all over the world......if that makes any sense at all!!!!! The *Pebbles* series was a big influence on people as well. Before you knew it there were tons of other "garage-comp-bootlegs" hitting the bins.....most of them were just as poorly produced as those *Pebbles* records, but still.....the spirit was there. And you better believe that Tim Warren is very much in debt to the Shaw-man!!!! Crypt Records *Back From The Grave* series was a much wilder, much better produced and superior 60s garage comp than *Pebbles* or *Highs In The Mid-Sixties*, but there's no doubt that the influence is there. Where would Crypt be now if it weren't for Mr. Shaw???? There were also other labels that Shaw had his filthy fingers in over the years.....like "Voxx", "Ubik" and "Total Energy".....just to name a few. And all of this doesn't even cut the cake as far as all the other music projects he did in the early to mid-seventies.

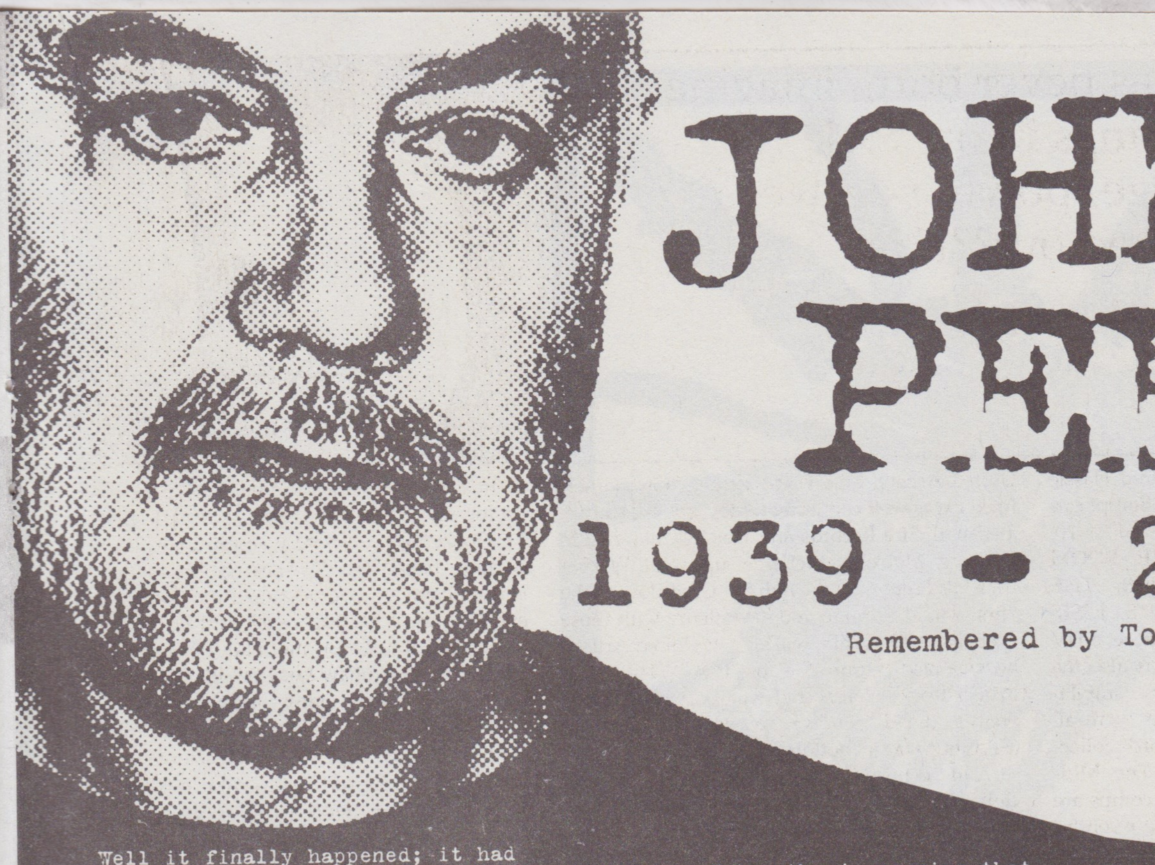
....Greg moved to Los Angeles in the early '70's with his wife Suzi and got a job working for United Artists. Like I said earlier, this motherfucker was well connected!!!! He was even affiliated with Sire Records and was instrumental in hooking Malcolm McLaren up with Warner Bros.!!!! Pretty crazy, huh??? Greg loved the "first wave" of punk and saw plenty with those eyeballs of his. While working at United Artists, he was also responsible for those "History Of British Rock" comps and was one of Seymour Stein's (head of Sire records) top men!!!! (Seymour was a "bottom").

....In the mid-eighties Shaw opened up a little club in Hollywood called "The Cavern Club." Basically, all the hipsters who were groovin' to the *Peebles* comps and all the many other 60s bootlegs of the time, started forming retro-revival bands. All this shit caught Shaw's eye so he set up a special arena for these new fashion conscious posers to strut their stuff and make their noise. All of the Los Angeles 60s revival elite played there......like the PANDORAS, MIRACLE WORKERS, TELL-TALE HEARTS, THINGS, etc....!!!! It was a real "to be seen" kind of place!!! The club imploded after two years. Too much posing and not enough sex in the toilet stalls to maintain a healthy club, I guess......

......Well, it looks as though I've just about come to my one thousandth word for this article.....excuse me, I mean "tribute/obituary".......and to be honest, I really haven't even fully penetrated the surface of how amazing this man's life was and all of his endless contributions to the world of music and such. Unfortunately Greg had some bad reputations too. Word on the street is that Greg owed a lot of bands money and wasn't hip to paying royalties.......that ain't too cool, but what can I say??? I personally know what it feels like not to be paid royalties and it's a bummer!!! He had his flaws like any other cocksucker out there, but his enthusiastic love for what he was doing made up for any lameness he was capable of as far as I'm concerned!!! I'm very much against labels burning bands but I'm also guilty as hell of being positively overwhelmed by Greg's "legendary status" in pop music. I'd be a fool to deny his influence on me. Like I said before, I never met Greg Shaw but I felt like I knew him by reading his many articles in music rags.......and the thing that I learned was that we *did* have something in common, we were both FAN-BOYS!!!!! One fan speaking to a whole network of fan-boys (and girls)!!!!! Shaw was the kind of fan-boy that went out and did his part and contributed to the things he loved and lived the life. He liked to party and take acid and all that other good shit and blow his brains out every now and again but nobody can deny that he was quite an over-achiever with very good intentions and connections. He met, saw and hung out with the best of 'em. He also recognized talent when other people had their heads up their asses.....especially in the early punk and power-pop days. He'll be greatly missed by people all over the world at this point.....I think "Greg Shaw" is almost a house-hold name in many circles. Unfortunately Greg leaves behind a twelve-year-old son and an enormous record collection....!!!! Hopefully Tristan Shaw will walk tall in his father's shoes some day and lay as naked prey to the music.

.....I think that pretty much sums up what I have to say. I've gone well over a thousand words, but I'd like to end here with this one question; "If Greg Shaw was never born, imagine how different things in the rock 'n' roll/punk/garage/power pop world would have turned out?????" Quite different I assure you!!!! As fans we will indeed miss you Greg. You are truly irreplaceable!!!!





JOHN PEEL

1939 - 2004

Remembered by Tony Fisher, London

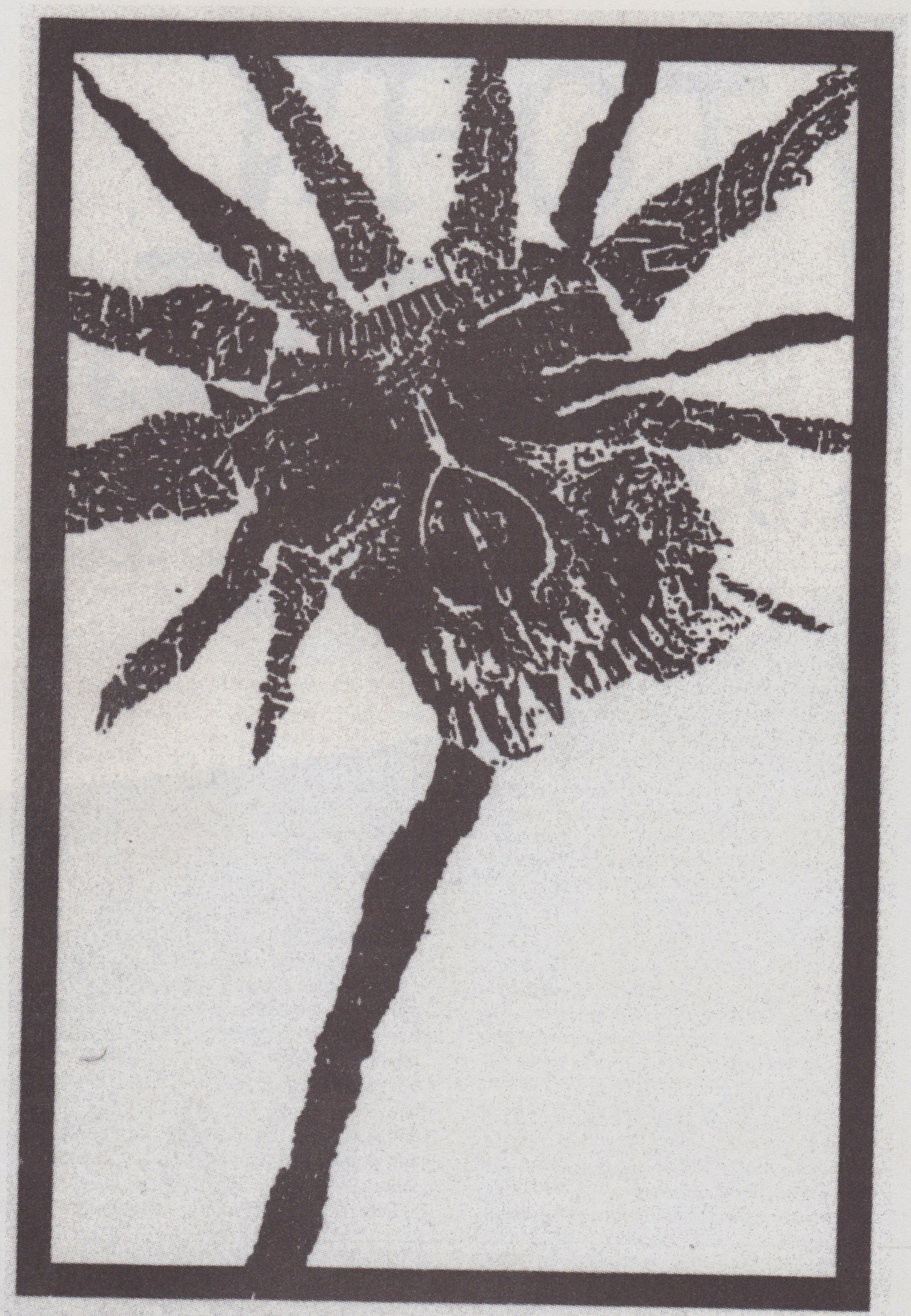
Well it finally happened; it had crossed my mind over the last few years that one day, he would no longer be around to broadcast to me and to hundreds of thousands of others. If you live in the UK and are into music (that of the esoteric variety) you will have, at sometime at least, listened to *The John Peel Show*. The show offered escape from the mundane, and featured one of the few sane voices on mainstream radio.

I regard John Peel as great friend although I had only briefly met him at some point in the 90s; I feel I know much about him and his attitude towards life through years of listening. Peel spoke to the listener. On air, he was relaxed, and spoke with his trademark self deprecation and wit. He rarely interrupted the tracks-these, the most thrilling, unusual, and sometimes completely unlistenable records to be played on national radio! Peel was always one to champion the new and adventurous, and was never afraid to stick his neck with a potentially alienating set. It had to be this way. Although most of our tastes tend to be a mixed bag, there is still a kind of tribalism to many people-an outlook that meant you could almost here the nation groan when the latest Bundu Boys or Napalm Death record came on. At times, Peel did get frustrated with his listenership. Annually, he took votes for the festive 50 chart; usually the fifty would represent the kind of records that I would image to be in a second year under graduates' record collection. That's not to say that they where particularly bad records, but pretty much genre defining, giving the impression that the huge breadth of John's taste was lost on most. Still he trucked on: Blues, Grindcore, Prog, Cutie, Grime, Hip Hop, Lover's Rock, Heavy Rock, Barbershop, Country, Gabba, Speed Metal, Breakbeat, Nifty, Noise, Electronica, Pub, Garage, House, Gospel, Swing, Industrial, Bluegrass, Cowpunk, Queercore, Shoegazing, Dub, and well just about everything that wasn't played elsewhere on radio. I do remember he opened shows in the early eighties with Sheena Easton's chart hit. Now that is unlistenable!

In spite of his love of music, there were times during his years at Radio 1-1967-2004-when some radio authority figures wanted Peel off air. Luckily John's good friend and the show's producer John Walters could talk for England and out-argue these people with ease. The two Johns were together 20 years, from Psychedelia though to Punk to Hip Hop and in typical downbeat style Peel had said, "I have always characterized the relationship between us, in irritatingly self-conscious parody of (Paul) Klee, as that of a man and his dog, each believing the other to be the dog."

As Peel made the broadcasts, Walters was checking out bands for possible inclusion on the show or perhaps for a studio session. The idea for "live in the studio" sessions came from an old Musicians Union rule that stated that a certain amount of weekly airplay should be live music. This opened a whole new world of possibilities to Peel that had previously been inhabited by the BBC Light Orchestra approximating stuff like Hendrix feedback by hurling their instruments down the stairs. Anyone got a tape?

Not only were the more known bands of the alternative scene invited to come in and try out anything they felt like. New and unsigned bands were also asked in, sometimes recording their only document. During the early punk years the Peel re-energized the program and featured just about anyone in the UK scene either on record or in session, but as Walter's pointed out, the one regret was not asking the Sex Pistols in for some recordings. But don't forget that while Peel was still playing stuff by the old guard he was very quick get behind bands like The Ramones, The Damned, Jonathan Richmond and the Modern Lovers, AC/DC, and The Mighty Diamonds and a little later The Pop Group, Wire, ATV, Crass and one of his all time favorite session bands, The Slits. Led Zeppelin fans were upset. The show's hallmark was always to look to the future, current favorites included Steveless (so named as there is no one called Steve in the band), and Trencher, whose session was the last to be broadcast. Even though John had reached retirement age and was settling into home life, sometimes even broadcasting from the family home, his energy, and curiosity for the new remained. We've lost a true pioneer and above all a good bloke.



Andrew “Stig” Sewell:

August 22, 1962—October 23, 2004

Andrew "Stig" Sewell was born in Cardiff, Wales on 22nd August 1962. He attended Brynhafod Junior School, then Rumney High School, but was the sort of intelligent kid who just doesn't fit into the conventional education system. His college education didn't last long—he became caught up in his teens in the punk revolution, as one of those who, along with the good mates who have traveled far with him, saw through the system and wanted no part of it.

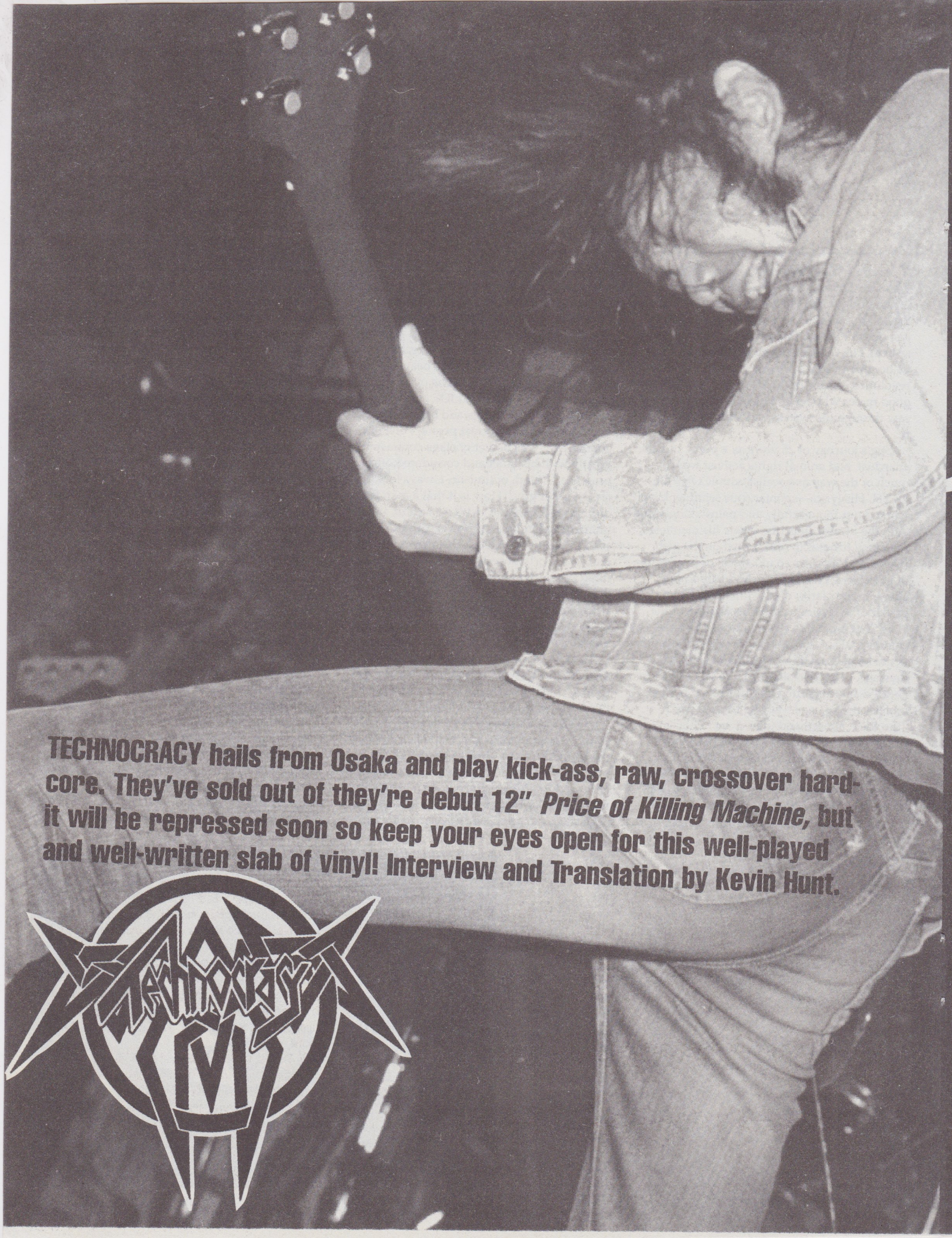
Stig's journey of 25 years as a punk, radical, anarchist, and animal rights activist was for much of the way as vocalist with ICONS OF FILTH. His lyrics—spontaneous sentiments yet worked out thoughtfully and painstakingly and with the utmost sincerity—were his manifesto; the many tributes to him posted on the web (www.londonpunks.co.uk) speak of inspiration, of lives being changed. These testify to the strength and clarity of his convictions, the power of his lyrics, and the reputation of the band. The band had a profound disdain for commercial success; the music was not a product to be packaged, marketed and sold, but a message, a voice to be heard, the voice of those cheated and discarded and destroyed by the system, the voice of—as Stig himself put it—"the used, abused and unamused." Stig saw himself as an ordinary bloke, but he was the inheritor of a tradition of radical resistance, a thread running back to the diggers and levellers and earliest champions of the common man,

The tributes to Stig that we've seen show intense respect, admiration and liking for a man who really did inspire and change lives. From Singapore to Slovenia, from California to Canada, from all over the world, have come simple, heartfelt sentiments both of grief and gratitude—far too many to itemize, but a few speak for the many: "Always a beautiful person, inside and out;" "someone of principle and true conviction;" "Stig and IOF have changed our lives;" "His thoughts and beliefs will be with me forever;" "a great person - one of the good guys;" "his power onstage contrasted greatly with his quiet and considered offstage presence;" "kind, optimistic, always looking out for the other guy." How is it that a man from an ordinary background, with no wealth, who was uninterested in fame or power, could command such intensity of feeling? The answer must be that, in a world obsessed by glossy, manufactured celebrities and all the trappings of shallow materialism, there are thankfully still those who recognize and revere honesty, genuineness, passion, sincerity, commitment and integrity, all qualities that were the measure of Stig.

Looking back over Stig's presence in the anarcho-punk scene, it would be too easy to think of him in just those terms. Certainly he lived out his beliefs—a dedicated vegetarian who saw right through the deception which powerful commercial and marketing interests have built between slaughterhouse and supermarket; a vigorous supporter of animal rights who couldn't bear to turn down a benefit gig for the ALF or Hunt Saboteurs Association; someone who would spend hours arguing the case for his fervent beliefs. Yet, Stig will be thought of more readily by many people as a family man with two children, Joseph-8, and Calvin-18, a man of ordinary interests and tastes. He was a keen footballer in his earlier days and always a loyal Cardiff City supporter.

We have been remembering and paying tribute to a remarkable man, trying to look past the tragedy of his untimely death to the things about him that death will never erase. What did his life mean? Quite simply, he was a man who saw, cherished and defended the values that cannot and will not be upheld by the politicians; by the spin-doctors and marketing men; the corporate fat-cats, by those of us sucked in or seduced or ground down by the system; by those of us who have looked back to discover that somehow we sold out. He was a modest but fierce and resolute champion of the downtrodden, the outcast, whether man or beast. He really was special, but we need build no memorial for him, for his memorial is built already in the hearts and minds of those who found purpose and inspiration in his lyrics, who were transformed by the power of his convictions. Just as he was larger than life, so he will be larger than death. Weep, grieve as you must, but never forget that, in the words of his family, he will always be with you, Take forward, if and when you can, the things he cared about, and you will secure for him a genuine immortality."

—Pete, Aitch, Daffy and Ed (The Icons of Filth)



TECHNOCRACY hails from Osaka and play kick-ass, raw, crossover hardcore. They've sold out of they're debut 12" *Price of Killing Machine,* but it will be repressed soon so keep your eyes open for this well-played and well-written slab of vinyl! Interview and Translation by Kevin Hunt.

MRR: So who are the boiz wot make the noize?

Technocracy: Tany (vocals), Yamaguchi (guitar), Toshiro (bass) and Kichijo
(drums)

MRR: When did you start playing?

Tany: First, I want to say that we find it difficult to express our true feelings, as we are so timid at heart!

Yamaguchi: We've been playing together as Technocracy since 2000.

MRR: For the sake of those who don't know, what does "Technocracy" mean?

Yamaguchi: Actually, we didn't actually know the Japanese meaning of the word until after we had decided on it as our band name. We looked it up in the dictionary afterwards and discovered the true meaning. It doesn't actually hold any deeper meaning for us. (*Editor's note:* Technocracy *is the name of a Corrosion of Conformity 12")*

MRR: Earlier this year, you released your debut 12" *The Price of Killing Machine*. How long did it take to record this?

Yamaguchi: We recorded it quite unconventionally, so it ended up taking three months all together to complete.

MRR: How many hours altogether?

Yamaguchi: We recorded the drum parts in one day. The vocals took about one hundred hours! That's the truth.

Tany: I wound up doing a lot of takes!

Yamaguchi: I did the guitar tracks in three hours. The bass parts took only thirty minutes.

MRR: I noticed that the guitarist, Yamaguchi, plays both guitar and bass on the record. Didn't you have a regular bassist at the time of the recording?

Yamaguchi: Our bass player just suddenly up and quit on us. When we mentioned that we wanted to do a recording he left the band, but we still wanted to do the 12" as planned, so I played the bass as well as the guitar on the record.

Tany: So there was no official bass player in the band then. When we played gigs our friend China temporarily filled in on bass.

MRR: When did you join the band, Toshiro?

Toshiro: In May, after the recording was finished.

MRR: How's it working out?

Yamaguchi: Look, his face is turning red!

Toshiro: I'm having all kinds of difficulties!

MRR: How many copies of the record were pressed, and are there any left?

Tany: We did five hundred and they're all gone.

MRR: Will you do a re-press?

Tany: Yeah, we're going to put it out again and it will be available on CD this time as well as vinyl. We had five hundred extra jackets printed up when we did the first press, so another five hundred records will be done.

MRR: Did any of the records from the first pressing make it out of Japan?

Tany: Well, our base is here so it was important for us to release it in Japan first. Once the repress is done we'd love to send copies all over the world. We'd be really grateful if some distros overseas could help us out. Please contact us if you're willing to take some copies.

MRR: Had you done any other recordings prior to *Price of the Killing Machine*?

Yamaguchi: We did two three-song demos that we gave away to people for free. There were about 100 copies each.

MRR: When can we expect the next Technocracy release?

Yamaguchi: Well, we haven't really discussed it yet, but I'm hoping that sometime next year we'll do another 12 inch. We're practicing new material now.

MRR: Tell us about Evilfly Records. Who runs it and what have you released so far?

Tany: Basically, it's my label, and so far I've only released Technocracy material on it.

MRR: I know that all of you have played in bands before starting Technocracy. To give people an idea of your roots, tell us about some of the bands that you've been involved with.

Tany: Me and Yamaguchi did No Side.

Yamaguchi: But we were fired from No Side, so Yamaguchi and I looked for another bass player and drummer and became TECHNOCRACY.

MRR: So why were you fired?

Yamaguchi: The reason we were fired is that China, the bass player from No Side doesn't like crossover hardcore. He's a hardcore punk purist. That's why we do Midnight Ressurector together, because that band is pure hardcore. To tell the truth, Tani and I used to have another hardcore band before No Side. This was when Tany was 24 and I was 21, so about 12 years ago. Kichijo and Toshi used to play in a band called Creep, but now have another band together called Flashlight Experience. I also play in Midnight Ressurector.

MRR: Are there any Midnight Ressurector releases available?

Yamaguchi: Yeah, we have a 7" out. Actually, Midnight Ressurector was going even before No Side. Tany was the worst vocalist I'd ever heard in No Side and I've been expecting that someday he will improve. This doesn't seem to be happening though!

MRR: So you're doing your best to raise him as a better vocalist?

Tany: And I've grown up well!

Yamaguchi: No, not yet you haven't!

MRR: What the goals of TECHNOCRACY as a band?

Yamaguchi: To write music that I can listen to myself and say it rocks. I'd like to think that if I was watching us play but wasn't in the band that I would enjoy it. I'd say that achieving this is my goal but I'm not there yet.

Tany: I'd like to play with many kinds of bands in Japan and overseas and be able to play as well as they do. I want our music to be heard all over the place and to be able to play everywhere. Ideally, I'd like to be able to just do the band and live off it, and have that be my life. I'd be really happy if we were able to get to that kind of level. Just to be able to do the band and not have to worry about working. That would be ideal.

MRR: I want to ask you to tell me about the story behind your song, "Murder Case"—"You hate most human being/ Murder case broke out indeed/ You stab him nine times." Is this actually about someone you know? What happened?

Yamaguchi: Well, I've never actually seen anyone get killed but it's more of a commentary about the increase in violent crime and murder in Japan recently.

MRR: What do you think is the cause of this sudden escalation of violence here?

Yamaguchi: I think that Japan is going to turn into quite a bad place. In the future, Japan's gonna wind up pretty fucked-up. There are a lot more crazy fucked up young people around nowadays.

MRR: Why do think that is?

Yamaguchi: To put it simply, after Japan lost World War II, people worked their arses off to get the country back on track in an economic sense. Because of the efforts of my parent's generation, the Japanese economy boomed. As a consequence, young Japanese today have been incredibly spoiled. Parents didn't want their kids to experience anything unpleasant or go without anything that they wanted, but they overdid it and now we have this young generation of spoiled brats with no accurate picture of the outside world. Today's youth depend on their parents for everything and waste ridiculous amounts of their parents' money. Many think it's "cool" to be a little bit "bad" and drive around in their dad's Mercedes Benz blasting hip-hop wearing baggy pants. If you go to Shinsaibashi in Osaka it's full of kids like that. I'm really concerned for Japan's future if these are the people who will go on to become the status quo. Japan's gonna be screwed.

MRR: No future?

Yamaguchi: No future!

MRR: In your "Thanks and Hail to..." list you mention a huge cross section of people and bands of many different styles. Does this reflect that you hope for a more diverse scene and like to play gigs with all kinds of people?

Yamaguchi: Yeah, we love playing with all kinds of bands.

MRR: So do you listen to a pretty wide range of music too then?

Yamaguchi: Yeah, a huge range. I like hardcore, of course and I have for years and years, but I don't like all hardcore music that I hear. I'm quite into metal too.

Tani: Although I play hardcore, I appreciate lots of different kinds of music.

MRR: In the early days, when you were younger, what were some of the bands that inspired you after seeing them play live?

Yamaguchi: SOB, Nightmare and City Indian were incredible! They were all spiritual experiences for me!

MRR: Did your life change after seeing these bands perform live?

Yamaguchi: Absolutely. I thought that I could die a happy man if I could be like these bands and then I started playing music.

Tani: I'm talking more about records when I say this but (was inspired) when I heard the *Great Punk Hits* album with G.I.S.M, etc. Live, I'd go to Eggplant (defunct legendary live house in Osaka) and I'd see bands like (Japanese) Doom, Jurassic Jade, and SOB. I was into Tetsu-Arei too. Show's back then were pretty scary for me to go to!

Tani: But seriously, I am so stoked that we play gigs with such awesome bands like them nowadays.

Yamaguchi: You asked earlier about our goals and I'd just like to add here that being able to play gigs with such amazing bands has always been one of my goals.

MRR: But that's hardcore for you. You can go out for beers and a yarn with members of some of your all time favorite bands just like friends. Your average person on the street can't say that.

Tani: You're right.

MRR: Any final words or messages to people reading this overseas?

Yamaguchi: If Pepper Keenhan hadn't joined Corrosion Of Conformity, then they would have been much better.

Tani: Don't say that! We'll send COC a copy of our CD!

Yamaguchi: Drink beer, go to shows, come home, listen to records, drink more beer, go to sleep, wake up, go to work and do it all over again. That's important! Do a band, write cool riffs and release good records. Oh, and I still have respect for COC!

Kichijo: Come to our shows and be pleasantly surprised.

Tani: The record turned out better than we thought but still not enough people come to our shows or any shows lately for that matter. Stop being afraid to go to shows!

Yamaguchi: Young people should stop wearing baggy pants!

Tani: Thanks for doing the interview, Kevin. Thanks to *Maximum Rock n' Roll* for running this interview.

Yamaguchi: Yeah, 'cos *DOLL* ignores us! We sent them a record but they never reviewed it. *MRR* is awesome! [laughter]

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THE TOTAL END

The Total End are a crushing five piece from Connecticut who play a perfect blend of Scandinavian D-beat and early 90's Crust Punk. Their lyrics are insightful, thought provoking, and delivered with intensity and passion. Their members have been active in bands such as Diallo, Devastation, and A.O.S. for much of the past decade. So here's their story...

Interview by Will Kinser

MRR: How did you all meet? Was it hard to find people to form a band in Conn.? (A brief history)

Matt S.:Mickey and I have been playing in bands for years. We've been friends for eight years or so. I have been friends with the other Matt for a while. We played in Scarred together. Tim played drums in Diallo towards the end of the band, and Jeff is a friend from the last couple years that we met at shows. Yeah, it's hard to find people in CT. It's usually the same couple of people in all the bands.

Jeff: Yeah, a lot the bands here are pretty incestuous.

Mick: Connecticut has a pretty spread out scene. We are such a small state and lack the luxury of a large metropolis such as Philadelphia or Austin, which in turn means no steady show space. In addition a lot of kids in Connecticut seem to be into punk through their high school years and then quickly grow out of it. The core punks who still exist are few and far between but are as die hard as any from around the world. Most people end up moving away because frankly, Connecticut is a really boring and mundane place.

MRR: What changed in Diallo that made you want to form The Total End? Do you think the music has changed, or is this a extension of that sound, kind of taking up were Diallo left off? What are the differences?

Matt S.: There were personal differences in Diallo. Three out of four of us played in The Total End. Of course the music has changed, kind of an evolution. The Total End was scheduled to start practicing before Diallo even broke up. Basically Tim, Mickey and I wanted to do something a little different with Matt#2, who just moved back to Connecticut from Pittsburgh.

Mick: I think The Total End is a little of both. There are aspects of Diallo that are filtered into The Total End (more of the melodic undertones, guitar leads, song writing) but I think its taken at a different direction. We all are involved in the song writing process now and

bring different influences into the band. I think in The Total End we finally are all involved in what the band sounds like, something it seemed we kept striving for but never achieved in Diallo.

MRR: In the song "Students or Statistics" you attack the school system for their emphasis on grades instead of the individual needs of each student, could you expand on that?

Jeff: We have a new song in which I expand some more on the topics broached in "Students or Statistics" actually. In "Students or Statistics" though, I attack teachers who tend to ignore the fact that kids exist, and are defined, outside the confines of the public school system. A lot of people tell kids, "Your job right now is *school*!" the problem with that mentality is it really only applies to your *Leave It To Beaver* sort of families. Kids these days have a lot of shit to worry about, and frankly, there are a lot of students with very despairing, nihilistic attitudes towards life. They're far more concerned with their day-to-day lives; the idea of "having to shape up now" so they can do something with the future isn't anything they want to think about. Now this leads me to the new song. As a teacher myself, I know that It's unfair to blame teachers for the problems of the entire educational system. There are many societal factors that play a role. Home life, for instance is a big one. How much money a town or state is willing to pump into the public school system. There are many hardworking, dedicated teachers out there who wish they could do a lot more for their students, but due to a lack of resources and help from the community, it makes it very difficult to do our jobs to the fullest extent. Legislation like No Child Left Behind create unattainable standards for students across the board, without taking into account any sort of socioeconomic factors. The federal government also doesn't do even close to a good job of funding our educational system. A fraction of the money that goes to our defense budget would do wonders for schools across the country, but I think the problem is that the people in charge probably don't want the masses to be educated. Then when the schools are left wallowing in the muck with no resources or funding those on the bottom are going to stay there. Of course, a look at the history of the public school system in the USA will show you that from its inception the public school system was never really designed to create thoughtful, free thinking, individuals, but clones and cogs for the industrial revolution. So yeah, I'm trying to put the blame where it belongs: with all of us.

MRR: Would Legislation such as No Child Left Behind influence you to vote? Do you think voting matters?

Jeff: I don't really think voting matters too much in the sense that both parties seem to have the interests of corporations ahead of the interests of people. If there was a proportional representation/instant runoff type of system in place, I would definitely say that voting would matter. I do think that voting was important in this past election, because while no matter who I voted for I'm still electing someone I don't want, but Bush is pure, unadulterated evil, and he needs to fucking go. Unfortunately, he's not gone and we're fucked. As far as No Child Left Behind, if there was a referendum to get rid of it, I'd be the first person at the polls; but let's keep in mind that John Kerry voted for No Child Left Behind, and his major complaint is that it's underfunded, which is one of my complaints also, but my biggest complaint is that it even exists in the first place. So I guess voting matters a little, but only to determine slightly different shades of the same color.

MRR: What do you think about having children of your own?

Jeff: I have 100 children to worry about every day. I think those are all I need. So I don't really see it anymore, though I used to.

Tim: It will be a cold day in hell before someone calls me daddy.

Matt S.: Hell fucking no. I have a hard enough time just living my life as it is.

Matt: I would like to have kids one day

Mick: Anything is possible, as it stands right now I do not want kids because I look at that as a responsibility I do not want nor feel ready for. Who knows though?

MRR: The song "Fallen Comrades" is relevant to just about anyone who has ever known someone who has died, even if they are not as close as a family member or a best friend most people still have regrets. Is the song written about anyone in particular?

Jeff: I wrote that song with my friend Chuck Neil in mind. He was a great guy I played in a band with many years ago. He was seriously one of the best people I've ever met and he died in his sleep one night. It sucked a lot because he was living in Boston, I was living in Worcester (30 min apart). I didn't visit him that much because I was working on my Masters degree and I always thought, "There will be plenty of time to hang out when I'm done with this" but it turns out there wasn't, and that's something I'll always have to live with. That song was also written with Steve Neil in mind. He was the singer of Barrit. I was at a show that he was at and didn't bother to go over and say hello. He died in a car accident like a week later. So that's another regret I have to live with. It was one of those things like, "Oh I see him all the time, I'll talk to him next Time" but you never know if there's going to be a next time!

MRR:The Total End have a very heavy crust/punk sound. How do you think you fit the current trends such as: D-beat, or hyper-fast thrash or Tragedy worship etc. Is the music you play influenced more by new or

CRIES OF PAIN GIG VOL. 13
victims
neverendinglasting... hardcore from Sweden
SSYSTEMA
Philly chaos punk holokaust!!
THE TOTAL END
dark and heavy hardcore from CT
DISCONNECTION
local hardcore punk, first show
ALLSTAR SWEDISH HARDCORE ATTACK!
DEADFALL
MANIC FAST HARDCORE FROM SAN FRAN
THE TOTAL END
ENDLESS NIGHTMARE
HEAVY HARDCORE CRUST FROM PHILLY
IN PRACTICE THERE'S NO LAW!
SUNDAY AUGUST 8TH $7.00 @ 7PM
THE GREATER HARTFORD DEAF CLUB 20 bigelow st. east hartford, ct
info: room101recs@hotmail.com
LUNG
2 man hardcore from Seattle
(if Crossed Out sang about medical oddities)
THE END IS NEAR
HEAVY HARDCORE PUNK
Drama Machine
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INTERNATIONAL HARDCORE
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MELODIC PUNK FROM FRANCE
BORN DEAD ICONS
HARDCORE PUNK FROM MONTREAL
LAST WORDS
LOCAL HARDCORE / JAPAN MEETS SLEEP
THE TOTAL END
LOCAL HARDCORE CRUST FIRST SHOW
NSDAY OCTOBER 29TH

older bands?

Matt: The Total End sounds like the Total End. We never aimed to sound like one band or another. We play what we play. All of us are involved in the writing process and all of us have many different influences which are all key factors defining our sound. As far as influences go, our sound is definitely drawn from new and older bands, but with no desire or attempt at trying to sound like any one particular band, or fit into one particular genre.

MRR: I would like to talk about the recording of the *Chasing Nightmares* LP, It's very well produced, and was originally released as a demo tape. Was it your intention to release it as an LP or did that just sort of happen? Do you think it is necessary for bands to record at a studio with all the amenities that Hatebreed can afford, or does anyone of you even give a shit? What is your take on the recording qualities of most bands these days? Do you prefer digital or analog?

Matt: We originally released *Chasing Nightmares* as a demo, it wasn't our intention to release it as an LP, until No Options approached us about releasing it on vinyl. I don't think it is necessary for bands to record with all the above mentioned amenities, just to record and be content with the quality of your recording. We had a pretty bad experience with the first attempt to record the demo, I think everyone just wanted to make sure that the recording actually captured what we sounded like. As far as recording quality today with most bands, I think most are pretty decent, it has been a while since I have really heard a "bad" recording. If I had to choose, it would be analog all the way.

Mick: Unfortunately I have never recorded analog. I really would like to someday, but have yet to find an affordable studio to do so at. From what I understand analog captures more of the bands actual primitive sound and limits the "cut and paste" editing of digital recording. Also, every band I have recorded with has done so with someone who either myself, or my bandmates are friends with. It just happened that everyone we worked with has used a digital set up. I really don't think it was our intention to record a demo and put it right to vinyl, it just happened that way. I think the recording qualities of different bands depend on the style they are playing. Perfect example is Disclose, who just wouldn't be Disclose if their recordings weren't blown out and raw as fuck. This leads to the fact that I don't think its necessary for every band to have a clean and sharp recording. Some of the best hardcore in the world has the worst production ever, and its great!

Jeff: I think that if you really want to document your sound, if you can use the best studio available, then go for it. The Total End has a thick, low tuned, heavy sound and if you go to a cheaper studio you'll lose that in the recording; when people hear a Total End recording, I want it to be a replica of our sound, not a faint echo. Also, we're lucky in that I've known Zeus who recorded us, since he was recording on a 4 track in his apartment bedroom. Basically, it's not so much who he records, but what he can produce. I remember back in the day Zeus could do some amazing shit with a 4 track; so it would only make sense that I would still want to go to him if he has the time for "smaller" projects, cause now he's got some awesome equipment. I also look at it like this, you can go to someone who's cheap and get fucked around and end up with a shitty recording, or you could go to someone who knows what they're doing and get something better in half the time, even if it costs more. It is funny though, recording a punk band and knowing that bands like Hatebreed or Shadows Fall, who do stuff like Ozzfest, were sitting in the same place only weeks before.

Matt S.: We did a try and record at cheap studio at first though, it was a total nightmare. We just walked away from the recording half way through it because it was a disaster. A guitar head was fried, and the bass cabinet was blown by the guy recording us. We weren't even playing when we broke everything, luckily the guitar head wasn't ours. We went to Zues because he could get us in right away and Jeff knew him. He does have a nice studio but we weren't like "Hey dude did you hear that new Hatebreed record? Man we got to record there."

MRR: Damn, I wasn't saying that you guys are a bunch of pretentious assholes who only record at rockstar studios or anything, I just wanted to know what you thought about

recording. Ha, ha. Anyway you all seem to be very active in the international punk community, what are some other things you do besides The Total End?

Mick: Matt S. and I do Cries of Pain Records. We have a small distro we bring to shows as well as t-shirt press and button press. Involvement in the international punk community is mandatory.

Matt S.: Mick and me also play in Another Oppressive System together, and Jeff and Mick just started a new band. Before Cries of Pain Records, Matt S. and I had worked on our own respective labels (Room 101 Records/Skit Records). I don't know if there is any concrete reason why we decided to start to work together, but being friends for years and growing up punk together definitely influenced that. I know from my own personal perspective on starting a label, I have a deep admiration and passion for music, specifically hardcore. My life is completely intertwined with it. Putting out records by the bands I play in is of personal importance, but not mandatory. Its very important to be in close contact with the band(s) involved in the project and to be friends. It is also very important to me to have a very subjective connection to the music I am committing to putting out. The shit has to move me in some way.

Every band that I or we have worked with has done something to impress me in some way. From Sangre De Los Puercos, whose "don't give a fuck if we know how to play" pissed off, punk as fuck attitude, to Etae and the sheer over-the-top songwriting, talent and brilliance, and finally Besthoven/Fofao, whose love for hardcore punk, which perseveres through his tough everyday struggles in Gama, Brazil and shows in the music he writes, is all representative of the many things I believe and feel, being involved in DIY hardcore. This transcends to picking the bands I'd like to work with. I don't really like to just offer a band a record without at least keeping some sort of contact outside of the label/band relationship.Great music, friendship and mutual respect are the three most important factors in putting out a record for me.

Out right now is the Sleeper Cell six song EP. Great Totalitär-tinged hardcore from Boston. They also have a EP on Partners In Crime Records. Hopefully by the time this goes to print the Another Oppressive System/Crossing Chaos split EP will be out and the Disclose/Besthoven split (split release with Plague Bearer from Denmark) will be close to release as well. For now in the immediate future, we have our first LP release slated to come out.

MRR: What are the major issues you are concerned with in U.S. politics whether run by Republican or Democrat?

Jeff: My main issue is healthcare. I think healthcare is probably one of the biggest problems in this country. It's my belief that government and business use healthcare as leverage against people to keep them in line. You want to be able to go to a doctor? You better get your ass working 40 hours a week. I'm lucky enough to have a job I love and have good health insurance, but I think about my anarcho friends who live day-to-day and job to job. They're living the way people should be able to, that is, not tied down, but if they ever get seriously hurt, they're going to be fucked. Lack of health insurance is one of the leading causes of bankruptcy in this country and it's fucked up that people can lose everything and end up on the street just because of doctor bills. Matt#1: Everything is pretty fucked up now or a least more so then usual. I am worried about the mess in Iraq, how our rights are being stripped away by things like the Patriot Act, healthcare, and keeping a women's right to choose.

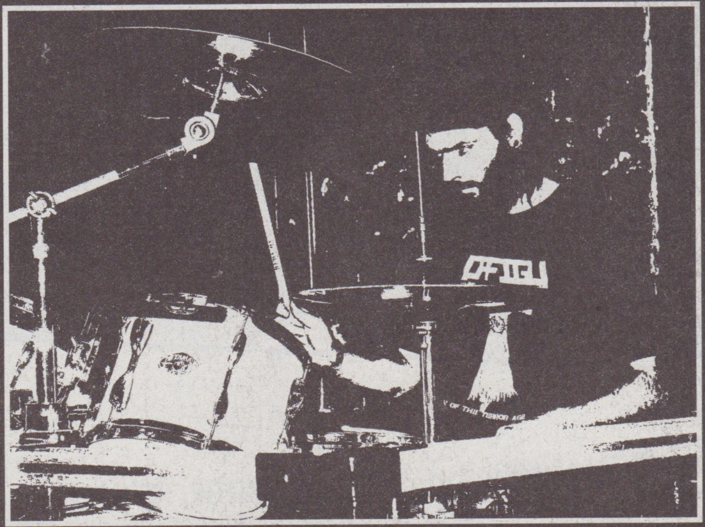
MRR:What are your plans for the future?

Mick: Recording for an EP in late October. Tim is moving away so touring will be hard to plan out for the immediate future though it has been talked about.

Matt#1: Yeah we are doing an EP on Putrid Filth and are supposed to do a split with To What End from Sweden sometime. We hope to tour some time next year. In the immediate future we will be working on breaking in our new drummer.

Jeff: If anyone wants to argue/discuss/ask questions about the lyrics, they can email me at thetotaljeff@cox.net.

Contact: The Total End / 25 Saint Augustine Street / West Hartford CT 06110 criesofpainrecs@hotmail.com
THE TOTAL END *Chasing Nightmares* LP available from No Options POB 22285Oakland, CA 94623 USA $9 U.S. $12 WORLD



only crime

Interview by Rod Meade Sperry

MRR: I know you've each got a history, both in bands together and separately. How is it that Fat Wreck Chords came to hear you and decide to back "To the Nines"?

Aaron: Well, we had sent out a demo of four songs to a few labels, Fat being one of them. They backed it and they wanted to see how we would grow as a band. A few months later, we recorded a new demo and sent it to them. Fortunately, they were all really stoked about it. Pretty much everyone else except myself has had a past relationship with Fat. I knew that, if they liked us, Fat was the label to be behind us.

Russ: When we initially began writing and doing demos, there was almost immediate interest from several labels as word got out about the band. I received an email from Fat's label manager, asking that they be given "first crack" at the project. Of course, we had already considered Fat, as my other band had a long and comfortable relationship with them and Bill, Zach and Doni had all worked with the label to some extent at different times. We sent them demos and they agreed to release us.

MRR: We'll talk more about your other bands a little later, but it seems clear from talking previously to Bill – and hearing you play – that Only Crime should not be considered a "side project". Can you talk about that?

Aaron: Totally. We are a 100% full time band. We are in no way shape or form a side project. Yes, we all have other bands that we are involved in, but we are a "real band". We are trying to keep ourselves from being viewed as a side project or as "featuring members of..." band. We are Only Crime, and that's that.

Russ: We've been prepared from day one to deal with this misconception as many bands that have formed from other bands are invariably labeled as "side projects." The simple fact is that Only Crime is NOT a side project by any means. We are as full time (if not more so) than many of the bands we were/are in presently. In fact, some of us consider Only Crime to be our main musical focus. The fact that the band's inner relations and overall camaraderie have flourished and jelled so quickly has only served to strengthen that feeling, at least for me.

Doni: I totally agree. With the guys that are in this band, I wouldn't want to put any less than 100% into this. We got in and wrote 3 songs in 3 days, which is something that I haven't done in years. It was a great feeling.

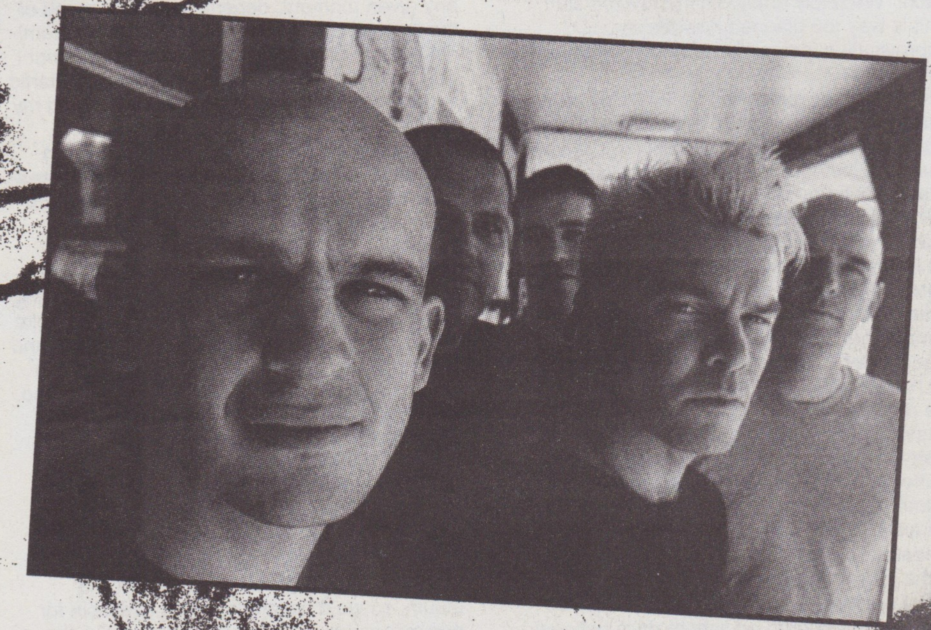
MRR: I'd like to hear how Only Crime is different from your other bands. I can hear it in the music, but I'd like to get your take on it.

Aaron: There is always part of my brain that is working on other styles of music that just wouldn't fit in with BANE. The stuff that we are writing with Only Crime is more pissed off and angry. It's 100% in your face. We hope that when you walk away, you're wondering, "What the fuck just hit me?"

Russ: For me, it is an opportunity to apply the myriad of experience (musical and otherwise) I have gained through participating in GOOD RIDDANCE for the last 15 years or so to a completely new situation. It's like having a clean slate, so to speak. From a musical perspective, it has enabled me to pursue a sonic and lyrical agenda with the benefit of forethought, which I never had before. I am able to take a step back from the material and really analyze it and ask myself whether it fits the musical/lyrical ideal I have set for myself as a songwriter for us collectively as a band. The founding idea for the Only Crime "sound" was a body of songs which were reminiscent of *Slip It In* era BLACK FLAG, but with shorter song lengths and more melody in the vocals. Obviously, while the spirit of this initial "mission statement" has been retained, once we were all thrown together, the music began to take on a life of it's own. To some extent, this prearranged musical template has been thrown out the window, as I think it should be. Overall, Only Crime is quite a bit heavier and darker musically than Good Riddance and much less lyrically overt.

Doni: Well, like I mentioned earlier, I love the fact that our creative process is lot more streamlined than my other band. Only Crime is able to get together and just create without trying to make punk rock rocket science. I didn't sign up to wear a lab coat.

Zach: It's the most focused project that I've ever been involved with. We all have reputations as players and together we know we can't fuck around. Only Crime is about laying waste and proving something. It has a point. For me, it's how playing in a band is supposed to feel like.



Bill: To me, it's got similarities to Black Flag, but with maybe a little more melody in the vocals.

MRR: I saw you guys play at Axis in Boston, opening for THE SUICIDE MACHINES. Not a bad-sized club. Is that typical of the kinds of places Only Crime has been playing?

Aaron: Yeah. We have played clubs the size of Axis (700-1000) and bigger clubs that hold over 2000 people. We don't care though. Only Crime will play anywhere.

Russ: Given that we have only played a handful of shows, I would say that would be about right. On that particular run of dates, we played to around 70 people in Baltimore and over 2,000 (supporting DROPKICK MURPHYS) in Hampton Beach. It was a good start to sort of test out our live feel.

Bill: I like clubs. I don't like larger shows as much. Some of my best memories are just shows that I've played in people's garages.

MRR: You had just squeaked onto that Axis bill after a bunch of dates with Dropkick Murphys, right? What were those shows like? A very different kind of crowd than you're used to playing to? How'd they respond?

Aaron: Those shows were fun, but weird sometimes. We really can't complain since it was our first string of dates. Some nights, kids were totally into it. Other nights, it took a while to get them going. The crowds were VERY diverse.

Russ: Since Good Riddance had the opportunity to support Dropkick Murphys earlier this year, I sort of knew what to expect as far as the crowds. Considering that 99.9% of the kids in attendance had no clue who we were, I thought we went over great. We got rid of tons of the 5-song demo CD's that we'd brought along and had a great response.

Bill: I thought Dropkick Murphys were way cool to us, and it was nice to be in front of the larger crowds.

MRR: Donivan, you weren't able to play that most recent string of shows, right? But you'll be at Warped?

Aaron: He had better be there, or he knows what he will get....

Doni: (laughs) For sure. I only had to miss the last run because I would have had to quit my job and we had nothing else planned yet. As soon as the tour started, Warped and Fat happened and I felt like a bigger dick because I missed out.

Russ: Dick! (laughs)

MRR: Who was that who stepped in?

Russ: Ryan Parker (SOME KIND OF HATE) was cool enough to learn the material and step in for us. He was great and a real cool guy to tour with. We enjoyed getting to know him.

MRR: The songwriting and playing seems to be very tight, yet the audience can tell that it's not overly "scripted". It's clear that there's room for some improvisation. Is there a primary songwriter or does stuff get written just by having you all in the same place?

Aaron: Well, we all have our own input in all the songs. All the songs are pretty structured, but for some reason we all clicked from the first time we practiced. We just have a feeling for each others playing, especially the improvisational parts.

Russ: We have been real conscious of giving the material plenty of room to breathe. Improvisation is a big component of what Bill likes to play and was a staple of Black Flag's music, as well as a lot of Bill's jazz influences. My experience in my other band was always very rigidly scripted, especially live, so I welcomed the chance to kind of wing it and push each other when we play and to work with only the barest of set lists. It's a totally new experience for me and I'm definitely stoked on it. As far as the songwriting, I was used to being the primary songwriter in Good Riddance, whereas in Only Crime, I'm mainly counted on for lyrics (so far) and one fifth of the creative input. This band is far more collaborative than anything I've ever been involved in before. Once the control freak in me calmed down (hahaha), I realized that I would be a fool not to just roll with whatever we were coming up with. We trust that if it can clear our five distinctive quality filters, then it must be ok.

Doni: The awesome thing about this band is I had only been in the band a week and they were listening to my ideas for arrangements. I really appreciated that. It made me feel like a part of the band.

Zach: We really enjoy the improvised stuff. Shit is way too planned nowadays. Improvisation is dangerous and we want to be dangerous.

Bill: The basic structures for the body of material on *To The Nines* was largely brought in by Russ and Zach, but then we did a lot to the basic structures to make them into what they eventually became.

MRR: You've got five members and a boatload of other projects. Is it hard to get you all in one rehearsal space at the same time?

Aaron: I think that we took the hardest part of being in this band - us all living across the U.S. - and turned it to our advantage. We get together for 2 weeks straight and practice for 6-10 hours a day. We know that we have to get the most out of our time

Russ: All of our other projects are generally pretty well laid out ahead of time, so it's only a matter of consulting our calendars, deciding on a time and booking flights. In the meantime, we are all kind of on the honor system to rehearse our individual parts so we're on the same page when we show up.

Bill: Logistics can be tricky, but at least we don't have any drug addicts or dysfunctional people to deal with. That's when it really gets hard, even if you are all together.

MRR: Who writes the lyrics?

Russ: I wrote them on this album. I am comfortable shouldering the bulk of the lyric writing, but we have several songwriters in the band, so we'll see what happens down the road.

Bill: In terms of writing lyrics, Russ is really making a name for himself. I think about 2000 or so was some sort of turning point for him lyric-wise, and I have really grown to enjoy his lyrics more than most of the writers out there.

MRR: The lyrics seem to vary from having a very straightforward message, and then they can flip on a dime towards a more imaginative kind of approach. Each works and they work together too. I have to ask: what do you read?

Russ: I was really anxious to get away from the kind of lyrics I was writing previously. I felt that, while I had worked myself into a fairly serviceable lyricist over the years, I had fallen into a pattern of wearing everything on my sleeve. I began thinking about my favorite songwriters (Shane MacGowan, Darby Crash, Richard Butler, Tom Waits) and what it was about their writing I found so compelling. All of these guys had a poetic element: a way of painting a lyrical picture without hard lines or borders. It seems to be very interpretive and almost dream-like. This is the kind of aesthetic I was chasing when I got down to putting pen to paper for Only Crime. I wanted to write songs that could mean everything or nothing at any given moment, depending on the mood of the listener. Just a cursory glance at the seminal lyricists that Bill has played behind meant I had to up my game. It's been a really cathartic experience for me and has definitely tested my abilities.

MRR: You've posted some demos up on the Only Crime site. Do you get the impression when you're playing that people have downloaded them and really "know" the songs?

Russ: Not so far, although there were several kids at the New Jersey show who were singing along to the songs we played off the site. A lot of people have emailed us through the site and given us their extremely lucid take on certain elements of particular songs, which is cool too.

MRR: Before you re-designed and re-launched the site, there were a couple of more mp3s of tracks available. One of those tracks, "Just Us", isn't on To the Nines Any plans for it to surface anywhere?

Russ: Who knows? We recorded several more songs than were necessary for the album, so we'd have some stuff available for comps or singles. "Just Us" didn't make the cut for the album, although we like the song.

Bill: Yeah, it's one of my favorites. That particular version is not great, to me, and we just couldn't seem to find a spot for it on the record.

MRR: The opening track on the album was originally known as "Song Five". It's now called "R.J.R". I'm assuming those are Russ's words, and the title is Russ's full initials?

Russ: My words but NOT my initials. It's a top-secret Only Crime band code. If I told you, I'd have to kill you. Next question?

MRR: Should that song be considered the most autobiographical song on the record?

Russ: It's up there. My lyrics on this album are really open to several degrees of interpretation. "Real Enemy", "On Time" and "To The Nines" are all more or less on the autobiographical tip. I tried to write songs that are thought provoking. That kind of material generally stems from some point of reference with the listener. Something they can relate to their own experience. It seems that almost all of the great songs that have touched me are, at some point, autobiographical.

Bill: The end lyric on "R.J.R" is so cool with the 3 voices. I love it.

MRR: Is "Real Enemy" the first single off the record?

Russ: I have no idea. In my opinion, it is one of the two or three strongest songs on the album. I am fine with whatever song the label thinks will work best. Some people have commented that it comes off sounding a bit like Good Riddance than I'd probably like, due to all the octave chord leads and the melodic chorus. At the end of the day, I will defer to the group conscience.

Doni: I think it's going to be "Sedated". We are already getting some airplay from that one and I think it's a hard jam.

MRR: I wanted to talk about the imagery of the band. I don't want to say "image" because that's not what I'm trying to suggest. You say on the site that Pete from Bane came up with your name. Why? And why'd it stick?

Aaron: We were all brainstorming for band names. We had a big list, but that stuck for some reason.

Russ: We had a hell of a time naming the band. We were so immersed in the writing and demo process that it became almost an afterthought. We were recording one night and we were furiously throwing around possible names. Pete's initial idea was actually "Any Crime", but we misheard him or something. The next day, we're driving around going "What did Pete say? Only Crime? Yeah, that was it!" We wanted something simple. No more than two words and easy to remember. It suggested some fairly broad visual interpretations as well for artwork.

MRR: How about the logo? I see there are two versions: one with strong blocky type and one with this great Old English lettering. But the thing they both have in common is the eagle. It looks great, but what does it mean?

Bill: This one is for Aaron or Russ. A seagull once shit me on though.

Russ: (laughs) The eagle has no relevance to our band beyond its appearance. Being a political guy, I could probably launch into a bit about the irony of national symbolism or something, but it really isn't anything more than something that we think looks really, really cool.

MRR: Who designed the logo? Did they do the site design too?

Aaron: I came up with the logo and the original website. It took awhile to get everything past Grand Master Stevenson.

Russ: Our friend Brent at www.engine13.ca designed our new site

MRR: Bill, has everyone in the band seen "The Raisinette"?

Aaron: "The Raisinette"? What the hell is that???

Bill: This question can't go on here.

www.onlycrime.com

only crime

TRUE NORTH

Shortly upon returning from their maiden European trek as True North, I spoke with two members of the band, Matt (guitar, vocals) who also plays in Assholeparade, and Ryan (guitar, vocals) who also plays in Palatka. True North also includes Dave (bass) from Twelve Hour Turn and Mark (drums) from Palatka. We discussed the band, their inconceivable debacles overseas, their brilliant LP, and just why the underground scene is so extraordinary.

Interview by Janelle Jones

MRR: When I say European Tour 2004, what's the first thing that comes to mind?

Matt: Uh, *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Ryan: What?

Matt: I don't know! We had a new experience every day. It was totally wild.

MRR: I heard some "bad" things happened.

Matt: *Interesting* things.

Ryan: I think it was 95 percent the most amazing time ever and then five percent of it was some really, really shitty things that should never happen to anyone. But people tend to hear the five percent more than they do the 95 percent.

Matt: Yeah, it was good; we had fun.

MRR: The record was released while you were there. Did you do anything special the day it was released?

Matt: I think we toasted—like, I think we were in Sweden. It was weird just because it was like, "I think our record's out today," but you never really know. We actually had the records already, so we had our little thing before. I think the day our record came out we had a day off, if I remember right.

Ryan: Yeah, it actually got released a week-and-a-half earlier in Miami as well.

Matt: It got released to the homeless population of Miami.

MRR: How? Why?

Matt: We got robbed on our way to Europe. The day before we were leaving, we had gone to get the last part of our record, the insert to the LP. It was shipped to Miami 'cause we didn't know when we were gonna be able to get it. We went to pick it up, we parked, and then while we were walking to the record store, our cars got broken into, and someone stole about 200 of our new CDs, a bunch of records, t-shirts, and shit like that.

MRR: How do you feel *Somewhat Similar* differs from past releases?

Matt: We've been together a longer time, so we're all a little more comfortable with each other—just trying new things. That first record, was just that initial surge of energy and then the second record was just kinda experimenting a little bit. I think this one's more on that path. It seems a little more confident, a little more defined. I like it. It's really good. I think there's a little more adventure in it, too.

Ryan: I think what also made it different is we all had equal parts in a lot of the artwork decisions, a lot of the lyrical decisions, a lot of the music, so it just felt really good for all four of us when it came out. It felt like an accomplishment.

MRR: Did you go into the studio with more songs and cut some out, or did you just have the eight ready?

Matt: There are some songs from that session that haven't come out yet and there are some that we're finishing up now for a different record. Initially, it wasn't gonna be an album; it was gonna be a bunch of singles and different stuff. It was supposed to get broken up. And then, we just started recording and kept recording and recording. And then, it was like, "Well, this actually just kinda feels like a record. We should just do it as a record." It's kinda funny 'cause it didn't start off to be an LP but it ended up that way. The extra songs are gonna be on another record that hopefully—we need to finish it up, still—but that should be out before the end of the year.

MRR: Are they gonna be used for that split with the Reactionary Three?

Matt: Yeah, it was gonna be a 7", but now we have too many songs, so it's gonna be a split LP. We're really excited about it; we just need to finish up some of the songs.

Ryan: It's a neat project too, 'cause it's a benefit for a record store here in town, Wayward Council, that we've all been part of at different points.

Matt: It's like a tribute to the store. It'll have all the history, all the stuff that's happened there, and the people who have worked there. It'll just be like a document.

MRR: Back to *Somewhat Similar*. On "Let's Get Past That", the lyrics are pretty minimal, but you're talking about music becoming "void and null." What can be done to reverse that trend?

Matt: I think a lot of things. Music is a release and music should be, not that we have a way to define it, but, in my mind at least, music is a celebration. It's a way for people to get together, kinda pass around ideas, whether they're celebrating themselves, celebrating the people that come to appreciate them, or just kind of representing their area. The underground music scene is a cool way to tie different people together in all kinds of ways. Sometimes people lose sight of that, they don't understand. Or maybe they just don't get or don't wanna get that kind of community side of the music. That's what separates underground music from the mainstream: it means something to people that are into this music; it's more than music. If it's just a hollow shell, then who cares? If

MRR: How *did* Dave hurt his leg in Europe?

Matt: He was attacked by wild beasts. He was saving a damsel in distress and he was mauled by boars or something.

MRR: What?

you're not putting effort into that side of it, then the music is just, "void and null." There's so much to it and so much that can be gained through it, and sometimes people underestimate the value of it and the impact they can have on people by making music, by listening to music, by just being involved. Because, you get connected to so many people around the world, it's such a power that other people don't have. And to not appreciate and not use that and recognize that, it's a shame.

MRR: Forget what critics say, how do you personally describe your sound?

Matt: It's kinda funny, I think, our music, it's kinda strange in the sense that it doesn't really sound like anything to me. Not that it's creating some new genre, but it just doesn't sound like stuff.

Ryan: Yeah, I think it's very strange when the four of us get in the same room and start writing stuff. It's a very weird process. And I don't think that we even think about it anymore, but we have friends who make comments and stuff all the time like after seeing us play live, they're like, "How the fuck do you guys write songs? What was that? How do you do that?" Not that it's like technically advanced or there's anything new going on, it's just like, "Wow, how did that happen?" I don't know. We just go out there and do our thing. Yeah, it's really weird. Other people have asked us that, and it's a hard question to answer. I mean, I know what we all listen to and that's really weird as it is 'cause all four of us are very unique in what we listen to. We listen to stuff the other three of us have no idea about, so it keeps it interesting.

MRR: I just find it has a real urgent sound. I always get that—this immediate *nervousness* almost.

Matt: Yeah, that really makes sense to me. It's a funny thing, 'cause there are four people in the band and everybody kinda writes the song together. So, it's four people with six or seven things coming together all at once. You're in this kind of circle, but all things are moving around within that circle so it's really hard to pin down. So, it does have this tension to it all the time. It's hard to say, is it punk rock or is it hardcore? I don't know; it just is. Some shit's fast, some stuff's slow, some stuff's totally in your face, but some stuff isn't. It's just music.

MRR: How *did* Dave hurt his leg in Europe?

Matt: He was attacked by wild beasts. He was saving a damsel in distress and he was mauled by boars or something.

MRR: What?

Matt: That's the story we heard. We were just goofing around playing basketball and we collided with each other. He hurt his leg real bad and had to go to the hospital. He actually had to have surgery. It was a pretty harrowing experience, the whole story. Trying to convince the Swiss hospital we had no money, but they had our friend, and we wanted our friend back, but we couldn't give them any money. It took a couple of days to work out a trade. I wish some other people would've been there, like aside from all of us, so I wouldn't have to tell the story, because it was weird. It was really surreal. The person from the U.S. Embassy really told me I should be ready to leave my friend in Switzerland 'cause they weren't gonna let him go. Everyone was like, "What are you talking about?" We should probably write it down at one point, like here it is, here are all the stories, and here's what really happened.

But it was funny, because it was a long tour and about halfway through, word started getting out about what kept happening to us, like the weird shit. So people were starting to come out to the shows just to see us, like, "Who *is* this band that this shit happens to?" People would bring us stuff, and say, "Oh my god, I'm so sorry. I heard this shit happened to you. Here's clothes and CDs and food." It was weird, like, "Holy shit! How'd you find out about this?" And they were like, "Oh, you know, everybody knows."

MRR: That's nice, though.

Matt: Yeah, it was amazing. And another thing, every time something crazy happened, every time some kind of boulder would fall on us or, like, the earth would crack open or something, there was seriously somebody there who we'd never met before, who we had no connection to, who would come to our rescue, like move everything to help us, go out of their way. We would've been totally doomed in some of these situations without these people that went head and shoulders above what any normal person would've done, and it really restored my faith in the community. People who lived on the other side of the world and probably won't see us again.

Ryan: They opened their houses up to us.

Matt: Yeah, they just tried to help us figure out stuff. This is what really makes me feel this community we're in is different. It's not part of mainstream society. These things don't happen to people, and this is why the community aspect is so important to not forget.

Ryan: It is especially obvious in contrast. We had these amazing people who were a part of this amazing community contrasted with all the lame mechanics, police officers, Embassy people, or hospital people, people in the "real world" we had to deal with. And it just made it that much more apparent how wonderful and nurturing and amazing some of the other people we met were.

TRUE

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NORTH

THE PARTISANS

Music is a weapon that infects the mind and empowers the spirit. Put these two entities together and you'll have thousands of armies spreading the cause of righteous truth via the weaponry of rhythmic sound and passionate delivery. To be a partisan is to be a resistance fighter. This particular band of Partisans has resurrected itself from the fading echoes of time with an explosive new CD that is undeniably one of the best punk rock recordings ever created. *Idiot Nation* is a statement about how the world is a fucked-up place where moronic liars wield the reigns of power and control. Things have not changed since the sorry state of world affairs inspired these four English teenagers to form a band. Heartless governments still start pointless wars while millions of idiots eagerly volunteer to go die. The wealthy still feed off the labor of the lower classes while contributing almost nothing toward the betterment of mankind. The media feeds the world a daily stream of misinformation in order to maintain the status quo. In spite of all this, the truth is still out there. Listen to this group's vision of the truth and pay very close attention to how each individual takes the garbage of existence and transforms it into beautiful and powerful music. Let the generals win the battles…they have already lost the war for our minds. This interview took place on July 31, 2004 at the Showcase Theatre in Corona CA.

By Marcus Solomon

MRR: It was a fabulous show tonight and I'm really glad to be here. I can't believe I let your music escape me for so long. When did the band originally disband and when did you get back together?

Andy: We disbanded around 1984. We grew up with the early stuff: THE CLASH, SEX PISTOLS, BUZZCOCKS, VIBRATORS, 999, etc. By '84, the punk scene had changed totally. The Clash had changed, The Sex Pistols had split up, and we didn't feel it was a scene to be a part of, so we split up.

MRR: You felt disillusioned?

Andy: Umm, yeah. It was a bit sad to see all the first wave of punk bands splitting up, or dying, or changing musically, so it was rather sad.

MRR: Isn't it interesting that everything that dies seems to come back again?

Andy: Yeah. It all goes right in circles and that's cool. We could never bring back Joe Strummer. We could never bring back Sid Vicious.

MRR: Joe was a genius, but Sid was a joke. I think other people caught the energy that they sent out.

Andy: The spirit of those people.

MRR: Exactly, and that's what I hear coming from your music.

Andy: We've been totally brainwashed by…well, we're such big Clash fans. We eat shit. Our band is nothing. Well, we don't eat shit, but we love The Clash so fucking much. We don't try to copy them, but I mean…

MRR: The influence is obviously there without it being a rip-off. It's not "Clash mania". In my honest opinion, I would say you're on par with The Clash.

Andy: Whoo! I don't know about that, but that's a compliment. Thank you very much.

MRR: So, when did the Partisans get back together, and how did that happen?

Andy: About four years ago. I was unemployed and the job center said, "We need to get you some education so we can get you back on the circle." They asked what I liked to do and I said that I'd like to do a Web [Internet] course, so they put me in a Webpage class…

MRR: The government gave you some job training?

Andy: The government is doing that, yeah. And then the teachers asked everybody to do a hobby page and the only hobby I do is music, so I thought I'd do a Partisan's page just for a laugh. I put it out, and within a matter of days we got so many e-mails. It was really weird. I had no idea that The Partisans were still selling records, or were so popular. All of us were so blown away from it. I mean, we like The Clash and all that, but as far as the punk movement was concerned, we got out of it around '84.

MRR: Life creeps up on you slowly, and sometimes you don't realize where the music went. Even so, you must have always been a musician.

Andy: Always, yeah. I've been in loads of bands since then, but you know, we got tired of the old punk scene. It was like it died for us around '79 or '80, even though we played kind of this music. We weren't really ready with our music. We were 15 years old, and we did a few demos and it got released. The true Partisans existed probably when the time was right…that was when we were only 21. That's where most other bands…you know, that age, you release their best music. So our music was, in hindsight, good. I think "The Killing Machine" is a great song.

MRR: Yes, it is. So, you did the Website and got quite an impressive response. Then what happened?

Andy: Then a few promoters spotted us and asked us if we wanted to play live, so I got hooked up with Spike, the singer. We found it a bit embarrassing actually, getting back together because so many old bands from the 80s have gotten back together and it is totally embarrassing. Not only that, and this might sound a bit cliché, but also we know how the kids feel, because we were also kids. It's such a cop-out. Oh, it's so fucking embarrassing to get back together especially without the entire original line-up.

MRR: Well, I think the kids can sense when it's real and when it's not.

Andy: We work really hard. We're not taking a piss. We rehearse every week, twice a week. You know, we really fucking work hard for this. It's not like "Aw, fuck it. We don't need to rehearse," and just play.

MRR: Tell me about the origin of the band's name, The Partisans, because that means a resistance fighter.

Andy: The original drummer actually decided to call us The Partisans, mainly based upon the French Partisans in the Second World War.

MRR: Resistance fighter in the obvious metaphoric sense of fighting against society.

Andy: Yeah, right.

MRR: To what extent do you take the partisan role in fighting against certain aspects of society? For example, in one of your songs it says, "We don't want your laws".

Andy: Yeah, "We don't want your wars". I write most of the music in The Partisans. I'm a musician and I love music. Rob is the vocal point of the band. He's the one who has got opinions about things. I am just a bimbo in the band. Any questions as far as lyrics are concerned, ask him.

MRR: What other music do you listen to for personal enjoyment?

Andy: Um…it's so embarrassing, but I'm still listening to FAT BOY SLIM and stuff like that. [Laughs] and THE SKULLS! I saw The Skulls in San Diego two weeks ago. Fucking brilliant!

MRR: Yeah!

Andy: Really! The latest bands that I think are really good are THE SKULLS, THE BRIEFS, and THE GIRLS.

MRR: The Girls? I haven't heard The Girls yet.

Andy: Fucking brilliant. Check it out! It's really like '77 kind of glam. Those are the three bands that really made the most impact on me lately.

MRR: THE ADICTS are also coming back strong again, if you haven't heard.

Andy: Their new album is really good as well. I Love The Adicts.

MRR: It is! It gets stuck in your head for days.

Andy: Yeah, very good. You know, I love anything where the music isn't out of tune.

MRR: You've been touring for how long, and how much longer are you going to be touring the United States?

Andy: We've been on the road for two weeks now.

MRR: That's all?

Andy: Yeah. This is our last concert. We go back home tomorrow.

MRR: Why such a short stay?

Andy: We've all got daytime jobs, believe it or not. You can only get so much time off. Work for free, you know. We have to go back to our normal lives.

MRR: I think you're going to be called back to play some more.

Andy: I hope so. I really do.

MRR: On behalf of the conscious population of the U.S., I would like to apologize for George Bush, and say "fuck you!" to British Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Andy: Yeah, yeah! And I accept that totally. "Fuck you!" for George Bush and thank you for what you said about Tony Blair. [Laughs]

MRR: Tony Blair is Bush's lap dog.

Andy: I know. Everybody hates him there in England, so no hard feelings. That's what *Idiot Nation* is about. It's about Bush and it's about Blair. I don't know if you saw, where the words are on the inner sleeve of the CD. It's an American flag and a British flag, and if you look very carefully, on the right hand side you can see Tony Blair. On the right hand side you can see George Bush. It's very faded.

MRR: I'll look for those subliminal messages right before I shoot myself.

Andy: [Laughs] Right! Thanks for the interview.

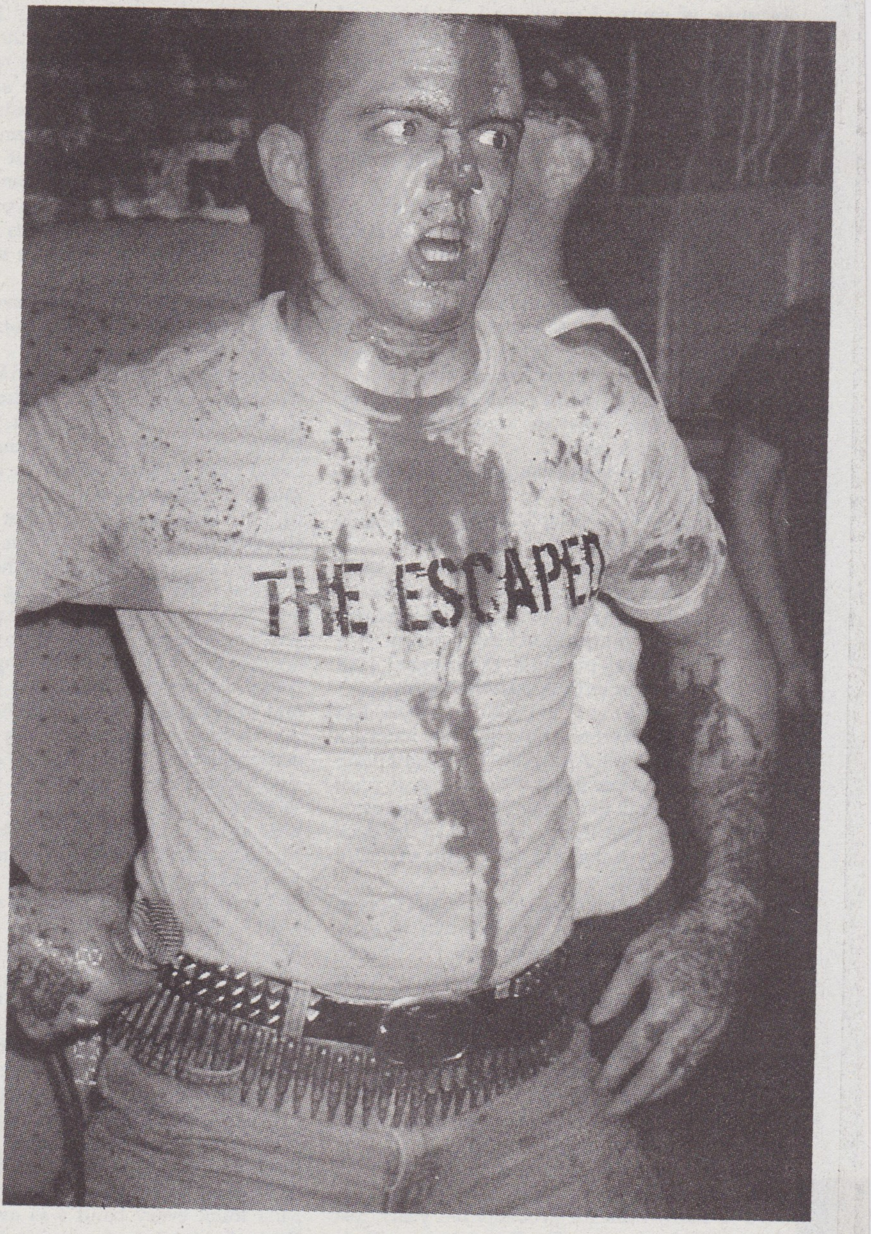
It only took 20 years for Andy and the boys to crank out more insightful, powerful, and relevant punk rock. Pick up *Idiot Nation* right now and be sure to play it real loud for your Republican neighbors.

This article is an excerpt from an interview *Nothing Zine* #4, which is still in progress. If you would like a copy of this, or any of the other issues of *Nothing Zine*, please send two stamps per issue or $1 for each copy to: *Nothing 'Zine,* 8560 Vineyard Ave. #507, Rancho Cucamonga, CA. 91730.
E-Mail: nothingzine@hotmail.com
www.thepartisans.net
www.drstrange.com

FOR THE WORSE

This interview was conducted at Roman's in Brockton after FOR THE WORSE played a particularly blood soaked set at their record release show. Mike (M) does vocals, Brian (B) plays drums, Dominic (D) and Tommy (T) play guitar and most of the blood from their set flowed from the forehead of Ryan, the bassist (R). Roadie extraordinaire, Keefe was also present. Interview conducted by Matt Breen from Radiobeat. www.wers.org/radiobeat

MRR: First of all, are you okay? That was a shit load of blood.
RYAN: I'm a little dizzy, but I'm alright. I feel good. It was a fun time. Enjoyable. Everyone loved it.
MRR: What exactly happened?
R: Basically what happened was that Dug was playing with Defcon4, so me and Buckley came up and wrestled him down and we cut him a couple of times and he was bleeding, so obviously he had to get me back. So, when we were playing they took the glass and cut me a couple of times, and obviously they cut me a little too deep. I was bleeding all over the place, but its part of the show, its good times. It happens.
MRR: What did you stab him with and when did he stab you back?
R: (laughs) Basically, what happened was when I cut him I took two bottles, I smashed them together in the bathroom, took a piece of glass and I cut him twice in the forehead. He pretty much did the same thing, it happened probably about the second song. Then he kept punching me in the face, which just made me bleed even more—which is what Buckley just did now so I'm probably gonna bleed all over my face.
MRR: Has anything like this happened before?
Mike: (intense laughter) On a regular basis, its bloods, guts, and rock'n'roll, no holds barred 100% of the time. I dunno, no regrets about it. I guess it's just something that's part of our shows now. I don't even want to play that much anymore, tonight I'm kinda getting scared. Like tonight we sounded like shit, everyone was just jumping on top of us. Granted they paid for the show, they're part of the band while we're playing as much as all of us are, if not then why fucking do it? Every kid out there has the right to go up there and go as crazy as they want, it's their microphone. It's their set too.
MRR: How many shows have you played, and when did these antics start happening?
M: We'd have to go back even before this band started, I used to be in a band called A Poor Excuse and so was Brian here, our drummer. I think it kind of started at the tail end of that band, and that's how that band kind of broke up. It got a little bit chaotic. I think it was karma, and Brian and I sort of carried it over to For the Worse. We started playing about a year and a half ago, playing out shows, and now every show is better and better and worse and worse at the exact same time.
MRR: When did you first start the band, I know there was a break between A Poor Excuse and For The Worse...
R: I was in a band that broke up. Then, in October, Mike called me and was like, "Do you want to play bass? I want to start a band." He had a couple of tunes that he wrote over the last couple years when A Poor Excuse broke up, so me and Mike got together in his living room, wrote a bunch of music, put lyrics together, and Brian came together and started getting the drums together on Owen, Mike's son and his little drum set to keep the beat. We did that for about three months and we wrote about fifteen tunes, finally got a practice space, got our buddy Tommy our first guitarist to play, just started banging out the tunes and did the first record and it came out awesome and after that we



got our buddy Dominic to play second guitar and from there it's all she wrote

MRR: What bands were you in before that?

R: Not worth mentioning. (laughs)

M: I actually thought it was a decent band. It was with Jeff from Concrete Facelift

R: It was called Negative Personality Disorder. Jeff the guitarist from CFL was singing and Corey, their drummer played drums. It was relatively the same lineup as CFL but it just didn't work out…which was good because it broke up and two awesome bands came about from it, which is great

MRR: Dominic, what were you doing?

D: I played in a band, with Jeff from CFL also, called Psycho Stick. Kind of along the same lines, skate rock. That broke up and then Mike gave me a call…

M: Tell them about the Nuclear Assault show.

D: Oh, this is a great story. The way me and Mike met was I'm a big thrash metal/ black metal fan. I went to go see Nuclear Assault, and of all people there was Mike McCarthy and these guys and we pretty much became friends there, but we became really good friends because...of course I got kicked out because I drank way too much. But my girlfriend was in there and in the midst of her biting some girl's nose off, all these dudes jumped on her and of course Mike and Craig from CFL ran over and saved the day and I'm indebted for life, man.

MRR: Brian, you were in A Poor Excuse and then you weren't…

B: I was actually the original drummer but took a three-year hiatus from this area in the military and they got a guy to replace me, but honestly I was the better drummer. (laughs) I came back from the military and me and Mike started talking about getting back together in bands about started coming up with some good stuff and got hooked up with Ryan and Tommy and….

M: The thing is that Brian and Ryan and myself have known each other for about fifteen years and all grew up together.

MRR: So Brian—were you on all the recordings?

B: I was on two 7"'s, the split with Right Brigade on Bridge9, and the Rodent Popsicle one.

MRR: You mentioned the Right Brigade split. That has notoriety because of the picture on the back, and the lyrics to "Do or Die" where you talk about jumping off the balcony. Was that all based on personal experience? Had you ever done something like that before?

M: I think that song is like old SOD-style, just writing songs about moshing and just having a good time in the pit. And yeah, you might jump off a balcony here or there, it's no big deal. It's a good photo. I will live forever in that I guess.

MRR: I was at that show and I was in the back and how many times did you jump off? Did you plan that out?

M: Twice. I didn't plan that out. You just have to have a couple of 40s in you and that was my buddy Chainsaw's last show with the Unseen and it was a little homage to him. He's a good guy and he was parting ways with those guys. It's like with any music, it just gives you that emotion, that adrenaline rush and you do what you have to do and you have fun doing it. And if it's at someone else's expense, well it sucks but it happens sometimes. If you can't take the heat get out of the fucking kitchen.

MRR: How did you guys get hooked up with Bill Toxic and Rodent Popsicle Records?

M: I've known Bill for probably ten years, just from going to shows at The Rat and seeing Toxic Narcotic forever and it was basically just like "Hey Bill want to put a record out?" and he's says "Sure, here's a record for you guys to put out." That's basically it. Bill does a lot of good things for a lot of bands that can't really help themselves out. He's been awesome for the Boston scene, that guy's a pioneer. He puts out a ton of good records and for a time when there wasn't clubs and stuff he put out a ton of records, booked some great, memorable shows, and all the while has had a band that I think kicks ass, and that's hard to do. I definitely give that guy props.

MRR: Chris from Bridge 9 put out the APE split, how did he get in contact with you for ForThe Worse or…how did that work?

T: We had kind of debated, we wanted some of our stuff issued on vinyl.

M: Well, we tried to do the first record with him anyway and he was real busy and having some problems with Lumberjack or something, so it wasn't a good time for him. We opted to go with Bill, but when this record came along we wanted to put something on vinyl and he was definitely willing to do that. I think it's cool that we're on Bridge 9 because we're definitely not one of those baseball cap hardcore bands. It's no frills and we're really the only 100% punk rock band on that label. Outbreak, they're like a punk band with breakdowns. They're awesome and they're out there doing the same thing. It's great. We have a great relationship, anything we need and he's there for us. I can call him at any time. The guy's willing to put a lot behind us and help us out. We really can't do tours and stuff because between the five of us we have four kids and our drummer is in the Reserves and we all have real jobs. It's tough to get out there and do anything.

MRR: What kind of shows have you played in Rhode Island and what's your take on that scene?

D: Mike books a lot of shows in Woonsocket and it's always great, all the *boys* show up.

R: Fitzie's place on Main street.

MRR: Do a lot of punk kids and hardcore kids come out? I think you guys are the type of music to bridge the gap.

M: I think the good thing about those suburban shows that are out of the city is that is that you get force-fed so much stuff in the city and in the suburbs those kids are starving for that shit. So you book a show in that area out there and you're gonna get twice as many people as you are, not that I'm against playing in the city but those kids in the suburbs are fucking hungry and fucking nuts and there's nothing better to do. There's nothing better than an angry eighteen-year old kid who has never even been to the city, that kid's fucking bullshit.

B: Some of the best shows we've played have been at Fitzie's place. They've been crazy.

M: Fuck, I was that kid growing up! I still am that fucking guy!

D: I gotta say the best show we ever played was with Fit For Abuse.

B: Definitely. At the Cambridge Elks Lodge.

R: Bloody and egged.

MRR: Matt Kelly was on vocals for that, right?

M: Yeah, Matt Kelly's real band.

D: I actually grew up with Matt Kelly.

M: I got bloodied, I got eggs thrown at me, bottles broken on us. Ryan got the set list stapled to his leg. I busted Tommy Somerville wide open. It was great. Good times, man.

B: Fit For Abuse was amazing that night.

T: They were awesome. A really great band.

M: I think every band was awesome. I think Boston's got a ton of great bands right now. I'm not even trying to name drop but I just think Boston's a good scene and there always has been. And when you say Boston you're saying the "New England area." Over half this band lives in Rhode Island. Dom lives in Worcester.

B: I live north of Boston.

M: Yeah, Brian lives in P-Town.

B: Malden's real close to P-Town. Yeah.

MRR: Mike, talk about how you hooked up with the wrestling industry.

M: Before puberty really hit I was all about pro wrestling. Just a huge pro wrestling fan all my life and you sit around and watch TV all your life, you're just gonna find something you enjoy. I was never into team sports. I was never a jock. My grandmother watched wrestling a lot. It was something I always wanted to do. I tried to get into Killer Kowalski's school, but those people were real pretentious and if you're not a big bodybuilder they didn't want really anything to do with you. I'm not willing to put steroids in my body, that's kind of what they wanted out of people. They're kind of a factory. My father knew a guy at work who was a referee for the IIW and he knew a guy who ran a school. Long story short I ended up graduating from squared circle academy out of Providence, Rhode Island. A guy named Kyle storm runs a school there. www.pwfnortheast.com to get in touch with them. Basically, I just traveled around a lot doing it. Won some belts here and there, worked for a lot of companies, having a good time doing that. Living out a boyhood dream. Music and wrestling. I can't go wrong. I can't ask for anything else in life. It's pretty good.

MRR: Did you get to pick the music to come out to?

M: Oh yeah, man. Usually it's either Gorilla Biscuits "New Direction" or Motorhead "Ace of Spades," and lately I've been coming out to "Do or Die" the first song off *Couldn't Give Two Shits about the Kid*s. I think it's appropriate. Those lyrics sum me up pretty quick. Its fun, but I don't know how much longer I can do it. My knees are shot, my neck is cracked, my thumb is fused. I tore my ACL in both my knees, my MCL. I'm just fucked up from it. I'm only 27 years old but I can't get out of bed in the morning. It sucks. It doesn't help jumping off anything I can when I'm not even wrestling.

MRR: Okay, well talk about the new record. The 7"...

M: The *Chaos Continues* 7" has four songs that aren't on the CD. Eleven songs total, and the CD has seven songs that aren't on the 7". Get that at www.bridge9.com and for booking info, you're better off going through them. Those guys are good people.

MRR: You played a new song tonight, "Morrissey Sucks", are you guys always writing songs?

M: We have seventeen new tunes already.

T: We had agreed at practice one night that we weren't gonna write any new tunes and…seventeen songs later…we have seventeen new songs.

M: The thing about Morrissey sucks, it's really tough, because my girlfriend's last name is Morrissey and it's really hard for me to sing that song because I love her to death and she gives me this evil look, but fuck those kids who are wearing those Smiths shirts and are into Bauhaus and Siouxie and the Banshees. Fuck you man, you're not fucking punk rock. You have no part of this scene. Punk rock is about lifting yourself up, about individuality and standing up for yourself. Don't wallow in your own self-pity. Go fuck yourself. I have no patience or time for any of those fucking kids. Go hang out in the Goth scene. It's not my fucking thing.

ANARQUIST: QUEER ACTIVISM & SQUATTING IN LONDON

This interview is completely unrelated to music-for a change. We interviewed queer activist and sweetheart Vaz as one voice of a radical queer group in London in April'04. He was kind enough to talk about the queer squatting scene in London and the history of an all-queer squat in Vauxhall which existed from 1998 until 2002. This is not supposed to the ultimate article about queer history-and present-in London, but a contribution to the Punk Without the Music movement.

Radical queers are currently fucking up shit in London and elsewhere. Full contact info is listed at the end of this article.

A little bit of context on the radical queer scene in Europe, before we begin:

Queeruption-the first ever London queercore gathering. It happened in Brixton, South London on the last weekend of September in '98. Our aims were to find an alternative, both political and creative, to what we were supposed to see as a symbol of our "liberation," to go beyond the narrow and restrictive idea of the "gay" scene, world, and subculture, because of its obsession with consumption and lack of radical politics. Queeruption was dubbed "an explosion of sex and politics for queers of all sexualities," and the first European radical queer gathering of its kind. Queerwind zine, from London, stated in 2003, "We believe that there is more to being queer than what is offered to us at the moment, and want to create a radical alternative to the commercial and apolitical gay scene. The festival was open to all, and was about us all taking initiative, creating and participating, instead of just consuming a lifestyle sold to us. We had bands, performances, parties, film and video shows, workshops, radical sex, actions, and lots more."

121 Railton Road, Brixton-a squatted social centre in South London that was occupied between 1981 and 1999.

Ladidah-an alternative, free, counter-Pride event in London; a pun on the commercialised Mardi Gras-event taking place in London.

Pink Pauper-a queer spoof paper; the name is a pun on the free British gay weekly, "Pink Paper."

The Vauxhall house-a squat in South London; a rather magical place, I would like to say in print.

The Pink Brick- a LGBT class war "group" from London.

The Vauxhall Erotic Cabaret-"Much of 1999 and 2000 were spent doing cabaret, which seemed to start a queer web of perversity throughout the squat scene. Erotic Cabaret was born out of a queer squat from a group of people variously involved in Anarquist and folks thrown together after Queeruption [I]. We were in need of a space to explore sex, genderfuck and the erotic, we had a party, and we had an open stage-so was Cabaret born! And an amorphous group discovered their need to perform, to liberate, to play and have fun. Erotic has been defined as whipping a coppers arse, drag queens going' through the trash, tantric massage, whorehouse songs, reverse striptease, shadow puppets fucking away with improbable devices, flight attendant instructions, liquid chocolate baptism, S/M play, and so much more. The parties invariably involved dressing up in a spectacular variety of skipped, found, or given clothes which tended to slip off people's bodies as the night wore on. Kissing booths, competitions, and games helped set the scene that could take us anywhere and usually did." An excerpt from the article "Anarquist-Or What I Did on My Holidays in London"; published in Queerwind, London 2003. Interview by Boitel.

MRR: HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN RADICAL QUEER ACTIVISM IN LONDON?

Vaz: Well, for me it started in Holland, really, and I brought what I learned there back to London. Actually, it goes back further than that. I was involved with "gay politics" until I went to live in the Netherlands, which was around 1993 or 1994. When I was there, I started getting into the "queer" idea; I started doing zines to work out what "queer" meant to me then.

When I was involved with gay politics, I always thought there was something missing. I had been in, you know, the gay group at college and in "Outrage!", a London-based campaigning group based around a man called Peter Tatchell; few radicals in the UK have positive things to say about him. Outrage! was supposed to be the radical thing, but they were racist, misogynistic, and they didn't support people that had disability issues. They paid lip service to a lot of things, but they didn't really follow up.

When I went to Holland it was really good, 'cause I was in another city, another country, and I was freed from all the bullshit I was used to putting up with in England. I just started writing zines, trying to figure out where I'm coming from. There, I also came out as "queer"-as opposed to when I came out as "gay" when I was 19 or 20. In Holland, queer activism was all mixed up with squatting, modelling, doing drag, and going cruising in parks, all of which I hadn't really done in England. It was a release, getting involved in soup kitchens, doing squat cafés, and lots of random shit. To me, that was the "queerness."

When I came back to the UK and got involved down at the 121 Centre in Brixton, I don't think there was anything particularly queer going on then. I met a few people there and they were like, "This and that happened, but it's gone now." There was the Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement and the Homocore stuff. I think we just decided amongst ourselves to set something up, and the word "Anarquist" came up in the process and we used it as a name. We had a monthly queer night at the 121, that's when more people started coming and getting involved. We did stuff like Pride and alternative actions and stuff against what we thought was the assimilationism of the gay scene. That's how I got involved with the radical queer stuff.

MRR: SO WHEN YOU MOVED TO THE NETHERLANDS, WAS THE WORD "QUEER" ALREADY BEING USED IN THE SENSE IT IS USED TODAY?

Vaz: No, it was virtually unused in that form. I used it 'cause I was using it in the UK. It's a word that is being used here anyway, all the time, as a term of abuse-it wasn't really the American use of the word, that radicalism around "queer." It was simply just a word, really. And I worked on that, what that meant to me in my context, and then I met other people and learnt what it meant to them, and together we were all queer.

MRR: MAYBE WE SHOULD CONTINUE WITH THE TIMELINE—WHERE ARE WE NOW, 1998? JUST BEFORE THE FIRST QUEERUPTION?

Vaz: God, it gets confusing, 'cause it's mixed up with so many things. We were squatting in a library in South London; we lived in another place before. That was our first queer squat with all-queer people living there. That's where we made our first Anarquist banners. You know, all black and red.

We were also doing alternative Pride things then, like doing our own picnics and stuff. Same stuff that we're still doing now. In 1997, we went on the Pride march dressed up as skeletons, representing marriage, army, and clergy, things that the gay mainstream was aspiring to then.

I think we just got to the point where we felt we should do something more, our own thing, which was pulling together the different things we did. People were involved in asylum stuff, the environmental movement, and other kinds of direct action, squatting, and anti-road activism. We thought we needed to pull all of that together, so why not do some long-weekend-thing, which basically what the first Queeruption was. That's when we came up with the name Queeruption. Around then, there was only about four or five of us who were organizing it, which was complete hell. I had never been so exhausted, even before the gathering. I can only remember half of the actual thing.

A really fucking great thing was that it was a great send-off to the 121, which got evicted in 1999. It was nice, 'cause this energy went into the space. It had been stagnant for years and then suddenly we had this queer group, things started happening again, we painted the space, moved the bookshop, and whatnot.

Sarit, another person that was really involved, brought the music. She was doing this club called Club V, and she was really into having Queeruption be more of a Homocore-thing in terms of the music. There was this pub down the road from the 121 that was the main venue for live bands, which was really good. It made people mix kinda differently.

Actually, what was also really great about the first one was that people were really mixed in ages; that's not something I have particularly noticed at the other Queeruptions I have been to. It wasn't so mixed racially, really, though.

I think if Queeruption hadn't happened in London around that time, it would have happened somewhere. You know, there was a momentum building up for a thing like that to happen.

It was interesting when it went to New York 'cause that gathering was different. Then Queeruption went to San Francisco and that was different as well. I can't quite remember how the momentum built up for the second London Queeruption in 2002. Probably, by getting the word out, organizing Ladidah, doing the *Pink Pauper*, and definitely having the house, Vauxhall, for four years. We used it as base and had a cabaret there; that was a really good way to pull people in. People used to say that it was a hub we could all go to and come from, 'cause there were no other queer squats around. That place also helped keep the momentum going.

MRR: COMING BACK TO THE FIRST QUEERUPTION, WHAT LED UP TO IT. WERE THERE ANY CONNECTIONS YOU MADE WITH PEOPLE FROM FORMER QUEER STRUGGLES, SUCH AS THE GAY LIBERATION FRONT, QUEER CLASS WAR, OR OTHER RADICAL GROUPS, SUCH AS HOMOCULT?

Vaz: Well, those groups didn't exist anymore by then, they were dead or something. The Gay and Lesbian Freedom Movement was the Pink Brick, and that was essentially one person.

The Gay Liberation Front was entirely different than us. I don't know, some of those people came to Queeruption and Anarquist stuff, one of them was my boyfriend for a little while. I mean, they came along and they brought something, but a lot of them just did their thing in the 70s, and then other things took off. The Gay Liberation Front was around in the 70s. Then I guess Outrage! was the 80s equivalent. There wasn't any connection between those groups and us, 'cause, basically, they weren't there anymore.

It was almost like starting from scratch. There was no real feeling of continuity with other queer struggles that had gone on previously. It was like we'd been beamed down into the city and there we were all of a sudden. We were aware of the history, and there are little connections to people who are still around, but I didn't feel there was any continuity there.

MRR: YOU KNOW, I WAS WONDERING, 'CAUSE I HEARD THERE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A GAY LIBERATION FRONT SQUAT ON RAILTON ROAD FOR A FEW YEARS, PRACTICALLY OPPOSITE THE 121, IF IT EVEN EXISTED THEN.

Vaz: I'm not sure about that. I mean it's possible, and now that you say it's ringing a bell, but I couldn't say for sure what was going on with that. I mean this is the problem. It's a real shame that we don't have more of an idea of our history and it's actually really good when we document stuff. There is so little information from that period. We just don't know what the hell was going on.

You can pick up stuff on the Gay Liberation Front, but it's really the personal stuff that's missing, stuff that connects through squatting. I don't know how queer they were and what they were demanding. Actually, I met a guy a few weeks ago who's like 70 now who wanted to celebrate 50 years of queer activism, but, foolishly, I didn't take his phone number.

There really is a timeline missing, 'cause with out it, you feel like you're reinventing the wheel. It's just important to understand what people went through and what the issues of the day were. 'Cause what was going on the 70s was so different from what we go through now. There's a huge difference with the change of wealth and the change of belief systems. I mean the family unit has been hit so hard now. Straight people are getting divorced, not getting married until their 30s, getting kids in their mid-30s, and having less and less kids. Whereas, in the 70s it completely different, you were shunned when you had a kid out of wedlock. It's really difficult to understand what the Gay Liberation Front were doing at the time with that stuff going on, as opposed to what we're doing now. We're fighting assimilation, but the Gay Liberation Front couldn't even get to that point, 'cause they were just trying to get basic rights, whereas we seem to get caught up in doing anti-assimilationist stuff.

I guess it's kind of depressing 'cause a lot of the other *gay brothers and sisters* are all fighting to be part of the mainstream, whereas back in the 70s none of the people had a chance in hell to be part of the mainstream. So, of course, they were fighting against everything. In a sense, there was more of an impetus 'cause just saying you were gay was already being revolutionary. It's just a completely different type of ballgame now.

MRR: SINCE I KNOW YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SQUATTING FOR YEARS, COULD YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT THE QUEER SQUATS YOU'VE LIVED IN?

Vaz: The first Anarquist-squat we had was a bunch of us going to the 121 Centre.

MRR: WAS THAT PLANNED OUT TO BE A QUEER-ONLY SPACE?

Vaz: I don't know if we set up exactly to be queer or not but it just seemed to work out that way 'cause we were all friends who happened to be queer. And we were like, "We have to find somewhere to live," and we did it together. To be honest, we didn't have much time to develop as a queer squat 'cause we had to fight the whole time to just be there and we just stayed there for a few weeks. Then we ended being distributed around to different places for a bit. I suppose as an experiment of queer squatting, it didn't really go anywhere.

There's also the thing of, "What is queer?" That, sometimes, gets a bit difficult. Yes, we were queer squat, but people would come along that others would not call "queer." But to me, they were.

I think the only queer squat that has really worked was when we had the place in Vauxhall. That was a squat and that was queer living. I think the other places I had been squatting in before were queer-friendly or supportive. There were a few queers living there that were active and doing stuff, so it got the image of being more of a queer space.

One thing that was really important about all the stuff we did with Anarquist, Queeruption, and the Vauxhall parties, was that it was mixed-we said it was "for queers of all sexualities." Basically, you don't have to have, "I'm queer!" written here *(points to forehead)* you just have to be open to the idea or into what we're trying to do. That's why we had all these people coming along. Some of them always thought of themselves as being straight. They'd just come along 'cause we were using their sound system or whatever, and maybe six months down the line some of them were getting on stage at cabaret and were performing and maybe saying, "You know, I might be queer." Which I thought was a really good effect, I think people tend to be afraid of what queer is supposed to mean. You know, like you have to fuck people all the time, that sort of thing. I think people seemed to loosen up a bit more 'cause they realized that you don't have to be or do this, that, or the other to be queer. You just have some sort of mentality where you're thinking, "Who am I, what am I, what my gender is about, what is sexuality about?" A lot of it was about having a good time. It wasn't an intellectual discussion we were having or some bloody fucking conference, it was based around parties and having a good fucking time.

A friend of mine and I used to sit around a lot of the time saying, "What are we actually trying to do?" and it was just like, "We're trying to have a good time, I think." That was what our premise was. It was basically about trying to survive in this shitty mundane world. You can run around with placards in your hand, doing direct action as well, but maybe a more relevant point of direct action is in your own life, is about how you survive in your own life. As it happened, it was about fucking having fun, putting on parties. We got involved with groups such as the Sexual Freedom Coalition even though we didn't agree with some of people there, we just simply wanted to network, have some fun, and bring some kinky sex into it and so we did it. And through that, we met other people from, for instance, the Sex Workers Union or the S/M scene.

The politics are in there. I mean you can't take the politics from it, but it is about fun things. Any message you're gonna communicate through fun is gonna have way more impact. If you go up to somebody and hand them a leaflet about how they should change their lives to one way or the other, that's fine, but if you do it as a cabaret act at a party you'll have a more massive impact on people. I think this is why the momentum kept going and still is.

MRR: DO YOU MEAN LIKE SETTING A POSITIVE EXAMPLE AND, YUCK, I HATE THIS WORD, BEING—EEK—"PRO-ACTIVE"?

Vaz: Yeah, I think I'd say Vauxhall was really successful 'cause it was linked to so many other things, to a lot of crazy people that wanted to do things; it was good space. As it turns out, squatting is a part of queer living to me and in that place it worked. I can't remember if we set out to be a particularly queer squat-it just was 'cause that's how we were. I have to say that the spirit of the house lent itself to be a queer squat. The fact that it had been a squat for ages, the fact that we found out all of the history of this place, the Poison Girls had lived there and other stuff. It was this kooky house with no electricity. It's all the little things that in themselves don't mean anything, but put together they do.

Vaz explained to me at the end of our interview a bit of the history of the two adjacent squares Vauxhall was on. In the late 70s and early 80s the whole squares had been squatted because some big planned building project had never become actualized. So, people squatted the empty property. Over the course of the years, most of the squats were turned into housing corporations. While some of the places are now private property, some are still council-owned in what is becoming an increasing desirable area in Central London. The last two or three squats on the square were evicted in 2002 and 2003.

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THE DICK SPIKIE

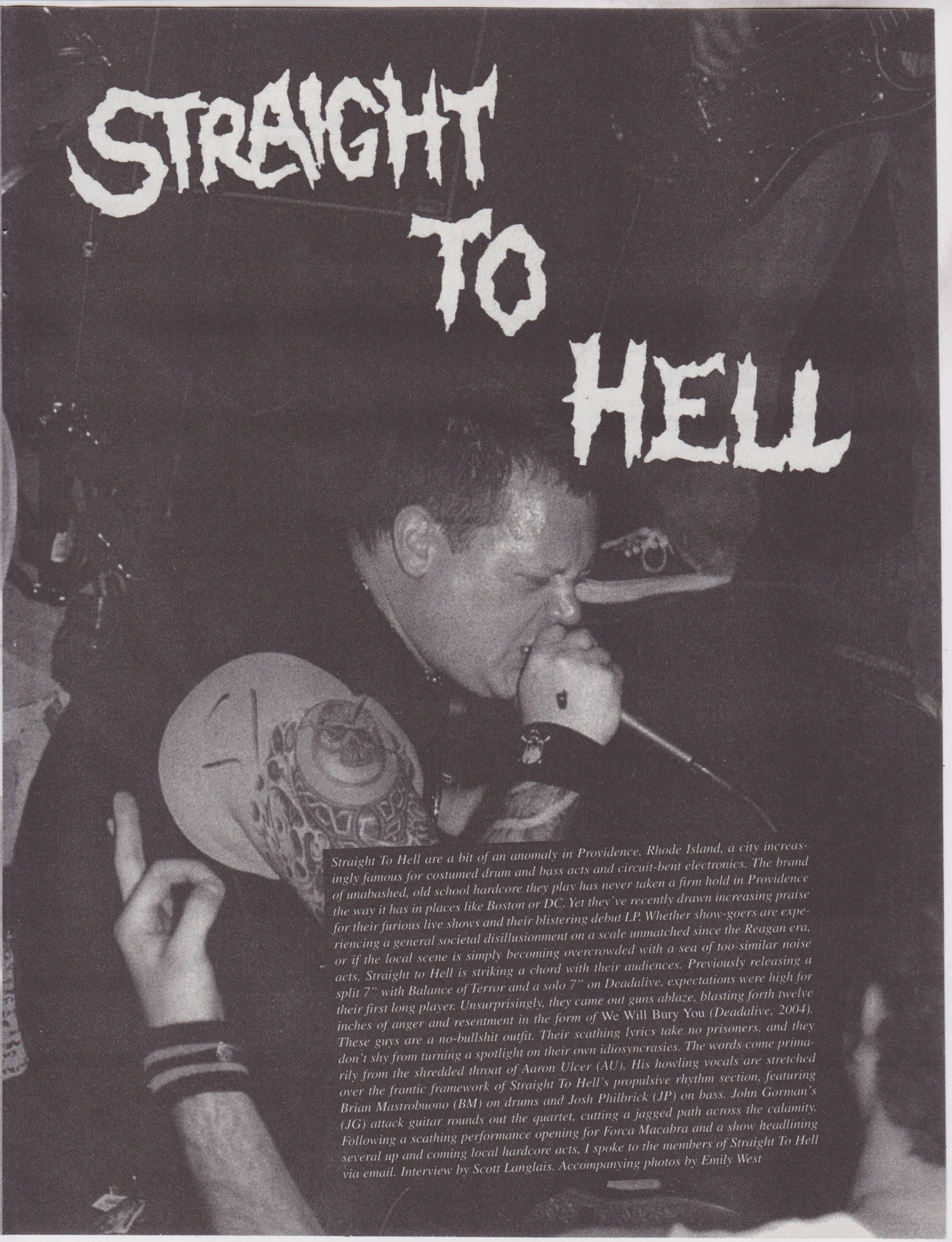
THE DICK SPIKIE formed in May 1997, in Otsu City in the area of Shiga in Japan. The line-up was Gun (guitar), Monta (drums), Scottie (bass) and Tetsutaro (vocals). A few months later, the band played its first gig at the Huckle Berry Club, playing as a part of the KIKAKU gigs. The band played its first national gigs in cities like Osaka or Kuoto. One year later (March 1998), they released their first recording on the famous Kyoto label, MCR Company. It was a split EP entitled *Transition Period*, featuring two other bands: THE DISCOCKS (Tokyo) and YOUTH ANTHEM (Osaka). A few months later, their first EP, *1994*, was released on Bronze Fist Records. The release if their first album, *Beginning Of The End*, released by an English label, Helen Of Oi!, quickly followed. The band then embarked on a promotional tour that took them throughout Japan. In April 1999, the band appeared on the Sapporo's Straight Up Records label with a split EP with THE BOLLOCKS, a record released for the promotion of a tour with the two bands. A few weeks before this tour, Scottie left the band due to time constraints. The charming Yukari quickly replaced him.

In the second half of 1999, the band created their own label, Dynamite Records, and released a video compilation entitled *Who Killed The New Anger?* This video featured several new Japanese bands: YOUTH ANTHEM, SPECTATORS, OI! VALCANS, BOLLOCKS and a few other notables. The band was also featured on several compilations. The first was *Punk, Skins & Herbert Vol.5*, released on Helen Of Oi! They also appeared on *Punx Are Fuck, Cooking Fuckin' Lunch...!!*, released by Pogo 77. After the success of their first video compilation, the group decided to release a second volume at the end of 1999. At the beginning of 2000, their second album, *Let's Start From Incomplete*, was released on Straight Up on CD on LP by Helen Of Oi! Following the second album, they appear on a couple more compilations: *Pogo & OI!chestra Vol.2* (again on Straight Up) and *Punx United Vol.2* (on Charged Records, an American label). Due to some personal problems, Yukari left the band and was replaced, at the last minute, by Tomokazu. Dynamite Records committed itself to the release a split EP with THE THUG HOSTAGE and The Dick Spikie. This release is entitled *Total Solution.* In September 2000, the band embarked on a twenty-date Japanese tour with THE SPECTATORS and France's SKARFACE. In celebration of this tour, Straight Up released *The Birth Of The Dick Spikie*, a mini-album that found the band going through a musical evolution, featuring more technical and melodic songs.

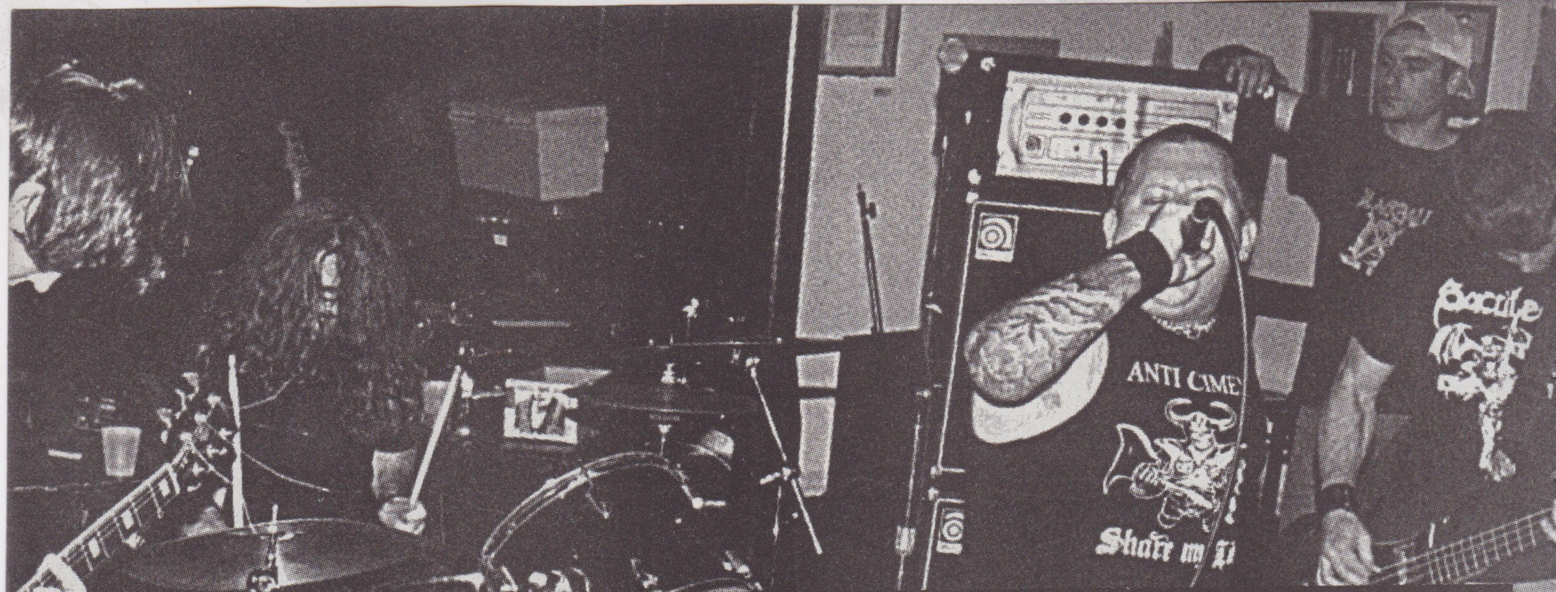
At the end of 2000, the band appears on *Mean To Year End*, a compilation Another Straight Up compilation that featured some bands from their home city: SANDIEST and THE CREED. In January 2001, The Dick Spikie left Japan on their first European tour with THE SPECTATORS. This gave them the opportunity to play in Germany, Switzerland and France. After the tour, the band took a much-needed break, taking time to focus on their jobs and families (they are parents). This time off of touring allowed them to play a few gigs in their region and focus on writing many new songs. In early 2003, France's Worsty Records come out with a *Best Of* CD, featuring many rare, live and re-mastering songs.

At present time, the line-up is: Tetsutaro (Vocal), Monta (Drums), Tomokazu (Guitar) and Soyanamoon (Bass). Their new record is a split EP with BAD NASTY from France, released by Dynamite Records (an all-together different label, although it shares a name with their own). The band recently toured South Korea and they are preparing to release a new mini-CD, which will feature five new songs sung in Japanese.

STRAIGHT TO HELL



Straight To Hell are a bit of an anomaly in Providence, Rhode Island, a city increasingly famous for costumed drum and bass acts and circuit-bent electronics. The brand of unabashed, old school hardcore they play has never taken a firm hold in Providence the way it has in places like Boston or DC. Yet they've recently drawn increasing praise for their furious live shows and their blistering debut LP. Whether show-goers are experiencing a general societal disillusionment on a scale unmatched since the Reagan era, or if the local scene is simply becoming overcrowded with a sea of too-similar noise acts, Straight to Hell is striking a chord with their audiences. Previously releasing a split 7" with Balance of Terror and a solo 7" on Deadalive, expectations were high for their first long player. Unsurprisingly, they came out guns ablaze, blasting forth twelve inches of anger and resentment in the form of We Will Bury You *(Deadalive, 2004). These guys are a no-bullshit outfit. Their scathing lyrics take no prisoners, and they don't shy from turning a spotlight on their own idiosyncrasies. The words come primarily from the shredded throat of Aaron Ulcer (AU). His howling vocals are stretched over the frantic framework of Straight To Hell's propulsive rhythm section, featuring Brian Mastrobuono (BM) on drums and Josh Philbrick (JP) on bass. John Gorman's (JG) attack guitar rounds out the quartet, cutting a jagged path across the calamity. Following a scathing performance opening for Forca Macabra and a show headlining several up and coming local hardcore acts, I spoke to the members of Straight To Hell via email. Interview by Scott Langlais. Accompanying photos by Emily West*



MRR: Providence is probably best known as the breeding ground for Load Records acts like Lightning Bolt, Arab on Radar, and Landed. What do you see your place as in Providence's current music scene?

BM: We're here to bum everyone's scene out maaan. No really, the HC scene for thrash hasn't ever had much except Dropdead and whatever band Aaron is in at the moment, so I think we're appreciated on that level by the few who care. Some of the arty dudes like us.

AU: Straightforward hardcore/punk has never really been the "hip" sound here in RI, so I'm not sure where our place in the scene is really. With the exception of Dropdead and maybe Verbal Assault, no hardcore or punk bands have ever stuck around long enough here to get established, so it doesn't look like HC or punk will ever get really big here in Providence. Most Load bands aren't really my thing, although I must say that Landed and Vincebus Eruptum were very intense and great bands even if they weren't necessarily "punk." We'll play with any bands that are cool, nice people and not rock star assholes, so I really don't care if people around here "get" our music or not, so long as the shows are fun and the people are cool and open minded about what we are doing.

JP: Honestly, besides the two bands that Aaron mentioned, I know nothing of the local noise scene. It's not my thing at all. As for *our* place in the scene, we're that band you see when any touring band comes to Providence. We don't usually play any shows where Straight To Hell "headlines."

JG: The Providence music scene is so factionalized that I really only see our place with similar hardcore bands.

MRR: How do you feel about the preponderance of noise acts currently playing in Providence? Does this movement seem genuine to you or is it an easy way for people to live out a dream of performing onstage without actually learning an instrument?

BM: It is rather easy to get a noise project going and I can't fault anyone for trying it since I did it myself (back in '92).

AU: I've seen a lot of really awful noise bands here that (in my opinion) didn't offer anything worthwhile musically or even in their "wacky" performances. As I stated, however, the band Landed were really intense (in a destructive G.I.S.M. sort of way), and the members of that band were all excellent musicians who were into HC and punk as well as the more avante garde "jam" type stuff they were doing, so it's not like *all* noise/jam/improv bands sucked. For awhile a lot of posers were jumping on that bandwagon and starting really crappy bands, but that has really fizzled out over the last couple years thankfully.

JP: No comment.

JG: I really don't care to listen to any of that stuff. Some of those bands are good live but very honestly I can't find myself buying and liking their records. I may feel that it's a genuine movement but just because some band is breaking new ground musically does not mean that it's good.

MRR: Your members have served tenures in quite a few well-respected bands. Tell us a bit about your individual histories and how they have affected Straight to Hell as a group.

BM: I've played drums in Dropdead since day one, I was interested in playing with Aaron during the gap after 1998 when Dropdead was somewhat inactive due to Ben working out of town for a couple years straight. I think playing more and at slower tempos has helped my drumming for sure, and these guys probably would have had a hard time finding a drummer to suit them if I wasn't around so I think we make a good team.

AU: Previous bands I was in that were established were Ulcer and Paindriver. Ulcer sucked hard and the only reason why I did that band for so long was because I couldn't find anyone else to play "extreme'" hardcore with at the time, as I certainly didn't see eye to eye with the other members very often. Paindriver is a lot less embarrassing to me because it was much closer to what I wanted to do musically. Straight To Hell is *the* band I always wanted to be in because these guys can write excellent songs that somewhat capture the elements of old US HC, Japanese and Scandinavian HC, as well as a bit of metal and punk. We also get along really well, which I would attribute to the fact that there are no spoiled rich mama's boys in the band or kids going through a punk phase they'll eventually grow out of. Those were significant factors which contributed to the demise of Ulcer and Paindriver, so I'm thankful to finally be in a band with members who are reading on the same page and pulling their own weight.

JP: I'm a band virgin. I've always played guitar but Straight To Hell popped my cherry. You never forget the first one.

JG: I played guitar in this metal band called Advocate for about five years. Aaron recruited me at an Advocate show as a matter of fact. I basically learned how to actually write songs that make sense towards the end of that band. I think the only reason why Straight to Hell got any attention in our early days was because of Brian's superstar status. Man did we fucking suck.

MRR: Is the anger real? Will you ever write a "happy" song?

BM: I'm not angry I just drum.

AU: For as trite and clichéd as it's become, hardcore punk is more relevant now than it ever was. Hardcore is what we will always play, and the medium is the message—pissed off protest music that pulls no punches and tells it like it is. The original hardcore bands started in the 80s during Reagan's (RIP—rest in pain) regime, and that asshole was nothing compared to Bush and his cronies. Until I live in utopia I will always have my eyes open, always try to keep my survival skills finely honed, and most likely always be pissed off about something, be it my own personal problems or the fucked up things I see happening around me. I was born with an inquisitive mind and a conscience, and even though my anger has mellowed out a lot over the years, I still have the curse of empathy and awareness, which means I will never be able to look at injustice or intolerance towards myself or others of the underclass without getting really fucking aggro about it.

JP: I just write songs that sound driving and intense. I'd be bullshitting you if I said that I really try to portray my anger through my songs. I never have a bad day, go home and pick up my guitar. Usually if I have a bad day I'll start right in on the alcohol abuse. I'm no gem, I have plenty of issues as most know.

JG: I have a great time when we play. Aaron's just naturally a bitter person on the outside so he writes fucked up lyrics. Deep down he's a cuddly badger. But seriously, how fucking lame is it

when bands write songs about how cool and uplifting our day to day is. Playing hardcore is a cathartic experience where you take out your aggression from everyday bullshit.

MRR: Do you feel the need to give the audience what it expects?

BM: I do, more precisely I feel that I have to uphold a certain standard for myself. I don't drink before we play for this reason. I'll leave it at that.

AU: I certainly don't want the audience to feel ripped off or bored, although lately I've been getting a lot of stupid "shut up and play" comments from the audience, which kind of irritates me. I mean, we're not Crudos or MDC, but I *do* have something to say. There's got to be a happy medium between having fun and rocking out, and also maybe trying to spread a message and learn about something. Too many shows today are just about the music I think, and I'd actually like to see a bit more discourse and communication. Given the current political situation- how can you NOT care about anything? On the other hand, I definitely *don't* like it when hardcore turns into that Crimethinc/hippie drum circle shit either

JP: My theory is that when you go to see a band and they're not visibly getting into their own music than how can you? As a bass player though I have a lot of room to fuck up or slack off (not that I do). I've only totally blown it once. Me and my buddy Jack Daniels.

JG: I don't care as long as we get paid. (haha) Personally I give 100% effort every time we play. We stand and deliver.

MRR: Hardcore has typically been a younger man's genre, does Straight to Hell's age make them different from the bands started by teens?

BM: I think this is less true now, the other two guys who are not me or Aaron are the same age as many dudes in hardcore. It's not 1985 anymore hardcore and over 30s are fairly common now.

AU: Hardcore is in my blood. Even if I drop out of the scene tomorrow, my tattoos will serve as a permanent reminder of my years of involvement in the scene. Playing with great bands full of energetic, pissed off, sincere young kids like Cut The Shit and RI's Third Death are all the convincing I need that neither Straight To Hell, myself, or hardcore are outdated or irrelevant.

JG: I'm still young man. But age=experience, and I take things more seriously from people who have stood the test of time rather from some eighteen year olds writing jaded songs about how hardcore isn't what it used to be or about how life fucking sucks when you work at the GAP and mommy pays your car insurance and daddy gives you a stipend.

MRR: Is hardcore more about spreading a message or personal catharsis?

BM: For this band, I don't know what I get out of it besides just playing. I don't get that much release from it and we aren't spreading any message I'd personally endorse I guess. That sounds kind of jaded, I do really like playing with these guys though.

AU: Both for me. As I said before, the world is more fucked up now than it's ever been—how can you turn a blind eye to that? But also, if what is weighing on my mind mostly are personal issues at a certain time then those are what will be expressed in my lyrics. It's all about being angry and telling it like it is for me. Hopefully the outcome is positive though, that being the music that we make out of our frustration.

JP: For me hardcore has always been about hating everybody else, I know it sounds childish but I have terrible social skills. I don't really have any message that I'm trying to push. Gorman has been one of my close friends for a long time and being in this band has made us even better friends, as for Aaron and Brian I'm just using them as a stepping stone to secure my place in the scene. So to me hardcore is about quality music, writing good songs and hanging out with friends.

JG: As I stated earlier, I find it as a release. Spreading a message? If you're into punk then you probably already got your foot in the door as to an "alternative lifestyle" so it's like preaching to the converted. But I have no problem with bands that spread the good word. Just as long as the word isn't some stupid crap like "jesus rules" or "drinking sucks".

MRR: You've covered bands like Anti-Cimex and COC. What are some bands that have influenced you that might not be readily apparant to the listener?

BM: Let Aaron and Philbrick talk about Squeeze for an hour here.

AU: Ahhhh, Squeeze. Between them, Devo and the Police (other favorites) there have never been better lyrics written about relationships gone wrong, except maybe by Out Cold and early Sheer Terror. Similar bitter sentiments have often been expressed in my own lyrics as well. I also really get into the snotty vibe of old US rock and punk bands like the Germs, the Lewd, Zeros, Stooges, DMZ, etc. I also like tons of thrash and black metal bands like Celtic Frost, Bathory, Onslaught, Blasphemy, Sacrilege, etc. But my favorites will always be good hardcore/thrash bands like Poison Idea, Discharge, Death Side, Bastard, Terveet Kadet, etc.

JP: I can't really comment here since for the most part we all like the same bands. Especially me and Aaron. We're cool for cats.

JG: Blue Oyster Cult, Sweet, Neil Young, Boston. I listen to a lot of classic rock as of a year or two ago. All that japcore, foreign-core, obscure-core stuff is hip now so I wouldn't be naming stuff unheard of.

MRR: Do you identify more with current music or "classic" acts?

BM: "Classic."

AU: Classic bands, as all the greatest HC and punk bands have had a finite lifespan. Naturally my favorites are broken up, but there are some great bands around nowadays who keep me involved in HC and remind me that the scene certainly isn't dead. I'd rather support them than any of these lame "classic" bands getting back together to cash in just because hardcore is cool again.

JP: I'm more of a classic hardcore/punk fan but there are bands like Victims, Hellshock, World Burns To Death, Toxic Holocaust etc., that I'm wicked into, and would love to play with. Hint Hint

JG: I don't identify with anyone. Especially those out there with delusions of grandeur that they can make a steady living off a type of music that is unlistenable to the average ear.

MRR: What do you value more in music, innovation/uniqueness or being the best at your own particular thing?

BM: Hmm. New doesn't mean better, nor does different, although I can appreciate it. Distilling and refining a style has a definite appeal to me.

AU: I just like straight ahead rock'n'roll of all kinds, be it punk, metal, hardcore or just rock'n'roll. Once we start to get into "innovative" territory that only serious musicians can understand, I have absolutely no interest anymore. So I guess I favor time honored, catchy, predictable music over anything else. I never said I wasn't one-dimensional.

JP: I think that being the best at what you do is very important. There are a thousand hardcore bands out there, why should anybody listen to you if you're not memorable?

JG: If you're going to do something is life, you might as well do it to the best of your ability so I would have to go with the latter.

MRR: How do you feel about the commodification of "punk rock" in the last decade? Do stores like Hot Topic dilute punk to just another fashion trend, or are they providing a service by exposing this culture to kids who might otherwise not experience it?

BM: Probably the former to a large extent since the scene can't absorb and "educate" all these people to "our ways" effectively. I don't feel any bond of community with someone wearing a Black Flag or Misfits shirt anymore, that's just how it is now though I guess.

AU: Again, I'll reply with another cliché. (Ahem...) "Let the corporations and the media try as hard as they want—true hardcore and punk can't be compromised". Even though in the history of "punk rock" there has been major label involvement since day one, real hardcore (at least in the US) has pretty much remained under the radar and will most likely stay that way. I can't think of any real hardcore bands that ever went for the gold and signed to a major except for Sick Of It All, and that didn't seem to last too long. And when I say *real* hardcore and punk I mean the good, sincere, angry stuff, not mosh metal gangsta core, postcard punk oi oi garbage, Warp Tour crap, or wimpy pop punk MTV shit. Those bands are punk and hardcore in name only, and have nothing to offer except happy syrupy love ballads, stupid postcard fashion punk statements, or bad downtuned groovy shit that jocks kickbox each other to. Fuck those kids. I am a totally different species than any of those dickheads, and I don't care if this sounds arrogant, but I swear I've got more soul in my little finger than all of them put together.

JP: I think that the "mall punk" stores are a direct link to older generation punks who decided that they wanted to make some money on something that is easy to market. It had to start somewhere and my generation isn't responsible. Everybody wants to look "punk" nowadays, everywhere you go you find studded belts in big retail stores, which is why I personally don't go out of my way to look overly "punk." Back on the subject of older generation punks—what the hell is the deal with these older bands that put out scarce records and want lucrative amounts of money to repress them? I'm not gonna name any names but that is just fucking lame. If you love your music why wouldn't you want people to hear it? Excuse me while punch somebody.

JG: That's not punk, that's bullshit. People are supposed to get into punk because they're alienated virtually everywhere else in life. Not because they get some lousy, watered-down excuse for personal expression shoved down their throats via cable TV.

MRR: You come from the age of print zines and tape trading. How do you feel about this aspect of DIY culture being largely supplanted by the Internet and filesharing?

BM: Well it's different, access is easier for sure, I don't think it "means as much" as it did when you really had to dig for information and it was on hand made tapes or xeroxed zines, it does feel a bit more soulless now but I admit to mp3 trading of rare stuff and I think music maniacs still do appreciate the content they are getting in electronic forms.

AU: I always hated most zines actually, albeit with a few exceptions (I just can't handle bad amateurish writing, knee jerk opinions and biased one sided propaganda—sorry kids). I do really love the internet though, and I have made so many great contacts and acquired so much great music for virtually no money at all. Yeah, I agree, zines had a lot more heart and soul, but the internet is just so fast and convenient I couldn't resist it anymore. Trust me—I was staunchly anti-computer for many years.

JG: Technology will always replace the old. Always. As long as the microprocessor speed doubles every 18 to 20 months accept the reality that there's nothing you can do about it so make the best use of it.

MRR: You've written songs denouncing the police, intro'd a song with, "This song is about what a loser my dad is," etc. Is there any subject that you feel is too sensitive or taboo to write about?

AU: I try not to get *too* personal about my own issues or political views, but the whole point of Straight To Hell is to just write about whatever the fuck I want to write about, with the exception of something that would totally break format like a happy love song or some shit. Both Ulcer and Paindriver had a lyrical agenda, but with Straight To Hell I wanted total freedom to write about whatever the fuck I wanted to write about. So far it hasn't deviated much from those last two bands, although the "political" styled lyrics of Ulcer are kind of toned down, and the fake posi youth/scene unity crap of Paindriver has been thrown in the trash where it belongs (I didn't write those cheesy songs, by the way). I've actually written about some really personal shit with this band, but I always try to keep it universal and coherent, without sounding like an emo crybaby who's looking for sympathy.

MRR: Your lyrics and between-song banter are brutally honest and appear to be truly sincere. Has this candor ever worked against you?

AU: Usually people think what I say is pretty funny, although as I said before, lately when I try to say something serious the audience just yells at us to "start playing". Also as I stated before, I think it's important to have fun. I actually do try to sing about things that are relevant to everybody. I have gotten a few "you guys were the only band who said anything worthwhile" comments recently, which I guess is the proof that at least *some* people are listening.

JG: Only when the jokes haven't been funny.

MRR: On the current punk scene, in "Den of Thieves" you say: "recycled opinions, repeated slogans for clones who have no brain stale fashion poses, useless statements for drones who act the same." How do you rectify these lyrics with the fact that you often embrace elements of the punk/hardcore uniform yourself?

BM: I dress metal myself.

AU: I'm the most "punk" looking guy in the band, and I've even toned down my image over the past few years. "Den Of Thieves" was written as caustically as it is because I hate sheep, I hate posers, and I hate people doing insincere things to try to be "cool." I am a punk, however, and proud of it. This music and lifestyle defines what I am, and I'm not going to let a few stupid kids ruin it for me just because they also like to wear black denim and spikes. I understand that there's not really anything original about what I look like or the music that I play, but I certainly hope that my dedication and honesty makes my "uniform" a little bit more meaningful. "Den Of Thieves" was written about the "try hards" not the "die hards."

JP: I'm a jeans and t-shirt guy myself.

JG: I use and assimilate what I consider is useful. There's way too many people into punk who try to fit in by believing rhetoric that comes out of the mouths of singers or printed in zines. Imagine if people just took the time to honestly think about what they value and consider true.

MRR: All your releases thus far have been vinyl only. Is this a decision based more on economic necessity or personal preference? Any new recordings on the horizon?

BM: You'll also notice we didn't release any of them—formats were up to whoever pressed and released them. Also vinyl rules, everyone knows that.

AU: We plan to release a CD discography very soon, possibly on Gloom records.

JG: If you don't own a record player I suggest either buying one or switching to eurotrash disco music. Our stuff will probably be available on CD format some day, but don't hold your breath given how long it took for our 12" to come out.

MRR: After playing infrequently over the last few years, you've been much more active lately, playing several excellent local shows. Do you plan to maintain this more aggressive live schedule? Any plans for a proper tour?

BM: I'd like to play more, it's up to those guys I don't usually book things and I leave it up to them. The tour thing isn't looking good due to my time being very limited with work and the "other band".

AU: Eventually we'd like to at least tour the east coast. As Brian said, other commitments prevent us from playing as much as we'd like to, but the motivation is definitely there, especially since our LP finally came out.

JG: Ideally I would like to play two or three times a month. Tour-wise, I'd love to conquer and pillage this country for a week or two. That would be a nice start.

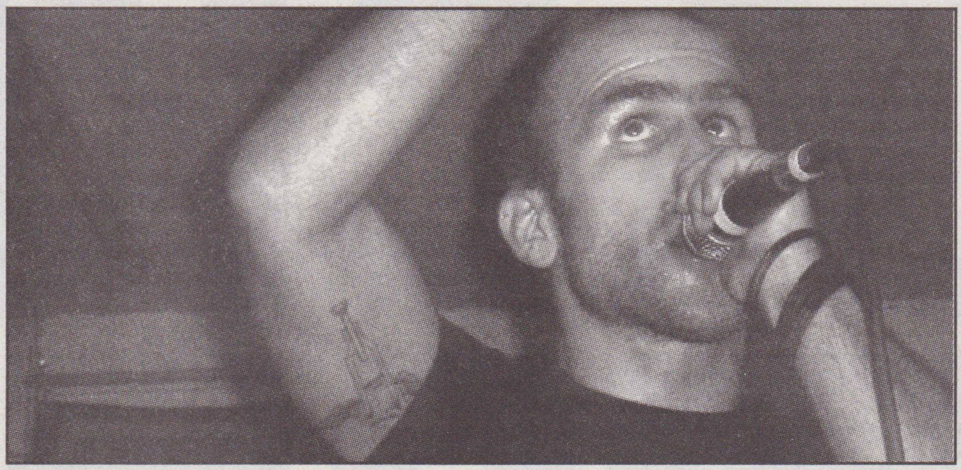
BLACK CROSS

The hardcore scene, like a glistening tide on a sandy beach, has always been caught up in ebbs and flows, continually washing up against the shoreline. Just when it seems to be needed, the ocean cascades over the beach and purifies the sands, wiping the beach clean of unnatural outgrowths and debris. Over the past few years, though, the cleansing tide seems to have drifted further from the coast than ever before.

Ryan Patterson, guitarist of Louisville's top-notch hardcore band Black Cross, is a veteran of many such changes. An avid participant in the punk/hardcore scene since the early 90s, Patterson has seen trends and fashions come and go, while continually reaffirming his belief in the possibilities of the DIY spirit. Black Cross has been one of the bright spots over the past few years, managing to remain true to their roots while capturing the attention of even the most cynical. As late 2004 approached, however, Black Cross appeared to be going through a metamorphosis of sorts. Each of the members of the troupe have a variety of other life commitments—marriages, jobs, other musical endeavors—and the combination of all of these other activities created a tenuous situation for the group, which could have brought about the end of the outfit. Instead, the fellas decided to fall back on the directive that made them start the band in the first place: to have fun while continuously pushing boundaries in their own musical experience.

Recently, Patterson, who is also the vocalist/guitarist for the harrowingly intense Coliseum, shared some time out of his busy schedule to share his thoughts on Black Cross, as well as the state of hardcore and independent music in general. While Black Cross might not be every punk or hardcore devotee's cup of tea, one cannot help but admire the integrity exemplified by Patterson and his comrades.

Interview by Brian Peterson



MRR: So, how does it feel to be a band that has a collection disc out already?

Ryan: Well, I don't feel like it's any sort of big feat. I don't feel like we've earned it more than anyone else, really. [*Laughs*]. I just think it came about more out of necessity. The *Black Widows* EP was going out of print and, ever since we changed our name to Black Cross, we wanted to put that out with the correct name. Since Initial was putting some time and care into reissuing the record, we figured we may as well go all out. We had all these extra vinyl-only tracks and outtakes that we figured we could add. So, it was really out of necessity more than demand. I don't think kids were clamoring for Black Cross odds and ends. [*Laughs*]. I'm psyched on it, though. I think it turned out really cool, and I'm happy with it.

MRR: So, why the title of *Widows, Bloody Widows*? Does this tie into any sort of Black Sabbath fanship?

Ryan: Well, that was one of the proposed titles for the first album. We thought it was awesome, but we just thought it was too tongue in cheek to be the actual title of a proper album that we wanted to be taken seriously. I think we wrote it in the matrix of one of the seven-inches, so I took the *Sabbath, Bloody Sabbath* logo and rebuilt it in Photoshop.

MRR: One of the most interesting things about you guys is that you have relationships with more than one label—Equal Vision and Initial. How have you been able to work that out?

Ryan: It works out pretty well, actually. Equal Vision is really cool with whatever we want to do. We're not an extremely popular band, so it's not like anyone is profiting much from anything we put out. Not to say that nobody cares. I feel fortunate to be as popular as our band is. However, it's not like we're selling tens of thousands of copies or anything. So Equal Vision is down with helping us put out our full-lengths, so we consider ourselves on Equal Vision, but I work at Initial and we're all close with that label so we put out other stuff with them.

With Initial I think we have more freedom to do odds and ends and things for fun, as it's a bit smaller of a label. It seems like Equal Vision has to have every release be a big, important release because they have so much more of their money invested in it. I guess I just think Initial is more built for stuff that has a more limited fanbase or following. I can't remember the last time Equal Vision put out a seven inch. So Initial puts them out and we have fun working with them, too.

MRR: Being involved with DIY music for so long, how did you originally feel about getting hooked up with Equal Vision, which is a pretty big label in stature these days?

Ryan: I think they are a rad label. They're just like every other label. I think people tend to lose sight of this sometimes when labels get big. Equal Vision isn't any different than Initial or anyone else. Every label is pretty much doing the time thing, it's just when you start to sell a lot of records things become different. You have to go through different channels and do things differently. We all saw it happen with Epitaph and labels like that. Equal Vision is one of those few labels that has done it all by themselves. It's all completely owned by one guy and it's all hardcore kids working there. Everybody is cool and down-to-Earth. There isn't really any red-tape bullshit. They just happen to sell a lot of some of their records. I think their hearts are in the right place. I talked to Dan, who is pretty much the A&R guy there and we discussed how Coheed and Cambria sold 100,000 copies. He said if anyone would told him that Coheed would sell that many records he would have told them they were crazy. They didn't sign them because they thought they would be huge; they signed them because they thought they were a rad band. I think that goes to show that Equal Vision, by and large, does what they feel is right. There are a lot of bands that are much bigger than Black Cross that they had the option to work with around the same time and they passed on them and chose to work with a band like us. The fact they invested money in a band like us knowing that we couldn't tour full-time and that we weren't "trendy," or whatever, shows me they really care.

So there wasn't any arm-twisting with regard to us working with them. We made sure that it was clear in our contract that if they were ever bought out by a third party whether it be a major or anyone else we didn't feel comfortable with we would be free to leave. They have to do what they have to do, but we don't want to be a part of it if they sold part of the label off. They were cool with that and they respect our decisions and philosophy as a band.

MRR: What do you think have been the biggest changes to punk and hardcore over the span of your involvement in the scene?

Ryan: I think it's a lot different. It's just changed. It's so much more of a business. It seems like it's less about putting out cool records. There was a point in time when you didn't have to see a band on tour for it to be popular. When I was in high school in the early 90s I was probably at my peak of fanaticism about hardcore, and I didn't have to see a band on tour to think they were really good. Now, it's like so much more goes into it than having a good record out. I don't think the quality of music matters as much as whether you're on the "right" tours and you have the "right" opportunities and you get in the "right" magazines. It's kind of weird and it's really hard for me to swallow it all. Sometimes it makes me sick, and other times I get caught up in it.

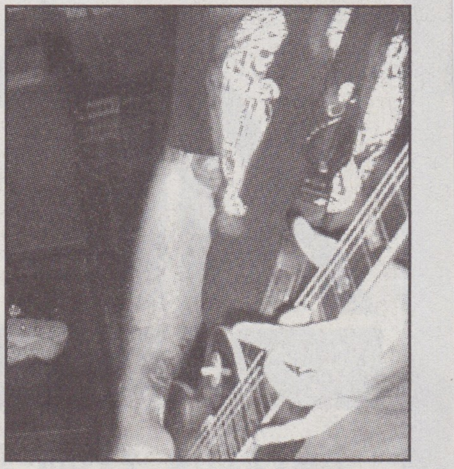
For instance, any time an issue of *Alternative Press* comes out I flip through it hoping to see an Initial band getting some coverage in there. At the same time, I see who's on the cover and sometimes I'm like, "I don't even know who the fuck this is!" Like Story of the Year? I don't know who they are and have no idea what they sound like. From what I can tell they are a bunch of weird, good-looking dudes with fake Mohawks on the cover of a magazine. I don't really know what that is nor does it really have anything to do with what I'm about or what punk rock is about to me. It's weird. *Alternative Press* is kind of the perfect example of a magazine that's really big and really typifies what's going on in mainstream punk. At the same time, I think they are trying really hard to throw in good things like that article they did on Gravity or the metalcore article that Ryan Downey did. I'm not into Shadows Fall or Earth Crisis, but to see someone mention C.O.C. and Unbroken, that's awesome, because those are bands that kids should check out. So I don't know if it's good or bad, but I would say that I get mostly frustrated by it. [*Laughs*].

As a person, I'm trying to get away from that whole mindset of being obsessed with *Soundscans* and talking about who sold how many copies of their record. It's hard not to get caught up in it because shit like money, power, and status are like fucking drugs.

Anybody having the opportunity to get more money probably has a hard time turning it down and looking the other way. I just want to get away from that whole thing. I just want to stick with labels that care about what we are about and are willing to support us. I just don't want to get into that rut of moneymaking and all the bullshit that goes along with it.

MRR: One of the things that strikes me about Black Cross is your ability to remain substantive in a time when the majority of hardcore bands don't have anything relevant to say. How do you see Black Cross fitting in among the midst of a sea of bands that seem to have gone the opposite route?

Ryan: On one hand, I feel like there are a lot of bands that do what we do. They book tours themselves and are sincere. I'm not saying there aren't other bands out there doing this, but I think one of the things that makes us different is that we're in a position where we're on a big label and we're maybe associated with that kind of scene than the total DIY hardcore scene, which kind of makes us an anomaly. People that respect us might think, "Hey, they're on Equal Vision and toured with some big band, but they do everything themselves, they don't have a manager and don't try to pay their rent off



their band." We don't do anything we don't want to do. We don't play CMJ because that's not our thing. We want to play shows for kids and show-goers and not for industry events. I think that's what makes us unique in our area of the hardcore scene.

At the same time, if you compare us with the bands that tour all the time and are really popular, we are barely even a blip on their screen. I don't think we're reinventing the wheel or anything like that. We just do what we're comfortable doing. I don't know where we fit in. We've learned a lot over the past few years. We have played some shows with some bigger bands where hundreds of kids show up and it's not really that fun for us. Last summer we toured with Thursday for a short while and played for tons of kids, but I felt no connection with anyone. I felt like I was playing "The Late Show With David Letterman," where there are all these people just standing there and watching you. You're not sharing anything with them. We were just there for "entertainment" as the opening band, the warm-up act for the headliner. I'm not saying that's wrong for anybody else, but it's not right for us. It doesn't energize us. After the five shows with them we played a show in a garage in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for about 20 kids and it was more fun than the entire previous week. It just felt real and reminded us of what we love.

MRR: Speaking of energizing experiences and all, what are some other things that get you guys excited as a band?

Ryan: Playing good shows with bands we like and seeing the faces we see every time we tour. Every time I get an email from some kid that says he likes the band and wants us to come play his town is still exciting. Every time I read a review where somebody "gets it," it blows my mind. I've seen some reviews where they call us By the Grace of God reformed and I'm like, "You have no fucking idea of what we're about." Not to say I didn't like By the Grace of God, but I just don't think we sound like them.

Connecting with people is one of the coolest things for me. Anytime I see a kid with a Black Cross t-shirt on I get psyched. I went to the grocery store the other day and saw a Black Cross sticker on someone's car and I got excited. I wanted to wait and see who it was. It's just mind-blowing to me that people buy our records and put our stickers on their cars. It's so awesome I can't even believe it. Everything is fun; it's just the bullshit that doesn't matter that gets in the way.

MRR: Yeah, sometimes it just seems these days like its different world in a lot of ways in the hardcore/punk scene.

Ryan: Yeah, it is and in some ways I don't fault those bigger bands because they're just doing what they have to do. I don't fault and band like, say, Thursday, because they are really sincere and the people that work for them are cool, whereas there are other bands who are represented by complete pieces of shit. These are bands who exist under the guise of punk rock who don't give a shit. And that's hard to deal with.

I hate that aspect of it. I hate managers. I think it's completely unneeded in punk rock! If you're Thursday, sure. If you're selling hundreds of thousands of records are on tour year-round, then sure. But if you're Black Cross, you don't need a manager. [*Laughs*]. All these fucking bands "need" managers and all these kids are deciding to be managers because… I don't even know why. [*Laughs*]. It seems like people used to do zines and set up shows and now they want to be band managers and booking agents. And I'm just like, "Why don't you do something constructive!?" If a band can't handle their own business then they shouldn't be a band. They need to get someone in their band that can handle that end; it just blows my fucking mind!

And booking agents and the way things work with all that shit. I do shows in Louisville all the time and people want buyouts and catering and guarantees and I won't do that shit! If kids show up to your show, you'll get paid well. If not, well then it's your fault. If you can't draw kids you want me to take money out of my pocket and give it to you? That's ridiculous! I don't ask for that with my bands and I won't do it for other bands. It's like these bands come through and they want you to give each member ten bucks just to eat. When I'm on tour I'm lucky if I can scrounge five bucks a day.

That whole thing has nothing to do with punk rock, at least to me. When it comes to money there seems to be too much greed involved and too many people wanting to cash in on it. Money is the great corrupter in life and it's certainly corrupting things here.

MRR: What are your feelings with regard to the actual sound of punk and/or hardcore at present?

Ryan: Right now, I think it's great. I feel lucky. In Louisville, where I live, there are lots of good bands: Breather Resist, Kodan Armada, The Lords. I just started another band called Coliseum and we are getting ready to put out a record. There's a whole crew of bands from home that are getting out there and that's exciting. In the bigger picture, there is good and bad stuff. I'm very bummed out and tired of mosh hardcore and the whole weird mosh dance moves. [*Laughs*]. It just sucks the life out of me.

In other cases, there is rad stuff going on. I really identify with stuff coming out on Prank, Manic Ride, and some of the Hardcore Holocaust stuff. I'm finding that I'm able to identify more with all these more DIY punk and hardcore labels over the past few years. It just feels so real to me and so much more of what I love about punk and hardcore, which is just being part of it and doing it. It's really inspiring to me. There are also rad new hardcore bands like Modern Life is War and Cursed.

Overall, I think it's good and there seems to be something positive going on. I don't know if it's a resurgence, but it seems a lot of people are getting pushed to the outskirts because of what's going on in mainstream hardcore or big business punk. It almost feels as if the troops are regrouping. [*Laughs*].

MRR: Black Cross has been around for about three years now. I know you're all busy with personal and outside interests—Rob Pennington just got married and is a teacher, you are doing Coliseum, your brother Evan does Breather Resist, and your drummer Sean also rocks out with Ten to Midnight. Where do you see Black Cross evolving and how do you hope to work everything out?

Ryan: Well, we kind of came to kind of a crisis point recently, where Breather Resist has been on tour a lot and they are doing really well. We knew Breather was going to do more and more, but Evan has always left summer time open for Black Cross to tour. At the same time, Rob got married so he can't tour as much anymore, or at least his time is divided in different ways. I also started Coliseum because it was something I wanted to do for a while, but at the same time it's almost me realizing that I didn't want to be left out. I don't want to be sitting at home while everyone else is on tour. So, we all talked about it and it was definitely one of those moments where the band could have fallen apart and we could have been like, "You know what? Everything is stacked up against it and everyone has so much going on. Why don't we call it a day?" I think everyone was aware that could happen but we didn't want it to happen so it didn't. If Black Cross plays one show a year, as long as we're still together we're fine with it.

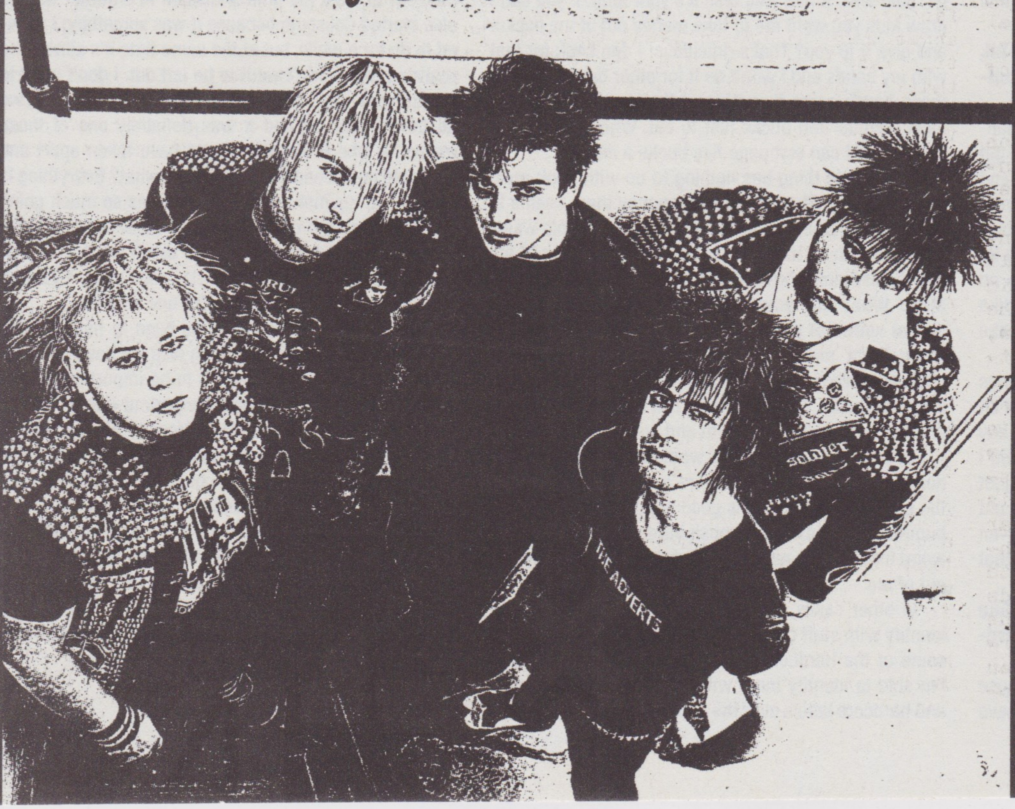
Our goal the whole time has been to have a band that can coexist with everything else we have going on in our lives. We always want it to be important but not at the risk of sacrificing other important things like our jobs and families. I want Black Cross to do a lot and I'd tour year-round if it was possible, but I'm also excited to see we made it through what could have spelled the end of the band. Punk and hardcore are my life. Playing this music is more important to me than anything else I've done in my life. It was important to me that we not be just a band, like many other bands I've been in, that stuck around for a year and that was it. We're coming up on our fourth year and we've accomplished more than I ever thought possible.

ACTION

Hailing from Toronto, Canada, Action are a politically-conscious punk band that has more in common, both sonically and lyrically, with bands like Aus-Rotten or Conflict than other "street punk" bands. They don't seem to fit neatly into the generic "street punk" category. Are Action square pegs in a round-hole scene?

Action is Andy (lungs), Greg (drums), Mark (lead and rhythm guitar, vocals), and Christian (lead and rhythm guitar, vocals). Jesse and Kyle equally share bass duties, depending on the time of year.

Interview by Dave.



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Take, for example, the legions of punk kids out there who call themselves "Zach Casualty." That's no different than the teeming masses of Brittany Spears fans.

MRR: I know you guys have been around for a few years playing as "Action", but for those who aren't as familiar with you, give an overview.

Action: Greg, Christian, Kyle, and Andy had been playing in different bands since mid-'99 under different names and varying sounds. Mark had been in another band for a brief period, we liked his playing and attitude, and his band conveniently disbanded at the precise moment when the other four of us had begun talks of forming Action. Things felt totally natural, and we went from there. It was an easy, logical process. No messy roster history, tears, blood spilled in the name of music.

MRR: Did you guys have any specific goals that you wanted to accomplish with Action? Is there an underlining message, political or otherwise, that Action is trying to convey?

Action: As far as our goals are concerned, the five of us have all grown up with music as the main motivation for what we do. With the way things are happening right now, it's like any goals we had are pretty much being realized.

Message-wise, the songs often tend to speak for themselves. It's pretty fucking obvious right now that anything with an honest message, political or otherwise, is being either marginalized or far outshadowed by a surplus of worthless, disposable music. It seems to us that there's a shortage of bands with something to say beyond the usual punk diatribe. While we certainly don't stray any farther than Discharge or Conflict, we hope people don't see Action's lyrics as flogging a dead horse. No one needs to be reminded that "War is bad!" or "Police are corrupt!" and so we try to ensure that we present an individual perspective based on the things we've seen and heard. We have a number of songs that are about very specific places and events right here in Toronto-take "Dawn of a New War" or "Won't Stop Screaming", for example-places and events that the rest of the world would perhaps otherwise be oblivious to.

MRR: Would you say that, as you call them, "disposable" bands are just a problem in the street punk scene, or are they a problem that afflicts the whole underground music movement as a whole?

Action: That particular affliction doesn't seem very prevalent in other genres of underground music. Street punk seems to us a very face-value sub-genre that's more about self-empowerment and egocentric wanking than creating anything that might benefit another human being, or that could inspire anything beyond excessive drinking. This is the same reason why, for example, Oi has become a complete fucking self-parody.

MRR: You guys have an obvious UK influence. What bands in particular have influenced you?

Action: Aw, it's that obvious? Yeah, we're all really influenced by the entire 80s European revival. Bands like Crass, Discharge, and especially Conflict, changed not only the musical progression of punk, but also its entire worldview.

We're all inspired by that particular notion that punk wasn't always safety pins and swastikas, that there was a period of time when social change was at the forefront of many peoples' minds within the subculture. It seems even more timely and appropriate to revive many aspects of that era today, when a minimal number of kids actually give a fuck about anything beyond where they can order their stretch pants. As far as current bands that influence us, it varies for each member, but there are bands like Tragedy and the whole Portland hardcore sound. There're not many bands out there anymore that we really find interesting right now. We like a lot of D beat.

MRR: How did your signing to Punkcore records come about?

Action: We'd played a gig here in Toronto two years ago with the Virus. A few members of the band were impressed with us, and they mentioned Punkcore. We were all 18 or 19, just punk kids from Canada who knew how to play their instruments and write adequate songs. Apparently Punkcore recognized this, and really honestly took a chance on us, pretty much based on the strength of the music, who knows? We're pretty lucky in that respect.

MRR: Your debut album has just been released on PUNKCORE, but you guys have been on the roster for quite a while. Why was there such a long time between your signing and the album's release?

Action: Many obstacles forced this release to be pushed back a few times. First off, the recording and mastering process was a bit of a disaster. We'd laid down seven songs back in September 2003 with the intent to record another five shortly after. "Shortly after" turned out to be about five months. By the time we returned to the studio, things were rolling pretty fast, and suffice it to say, the final session was a rush job. We won't even mention the slacker who did the recording.

MRR: How do you guys feel about your label and label mates? I know that Punkcore drew a lot of criticism for signing the Christian band, the Havoc. How do you feel about this?

Action: Punkcore's a very dedicated, professional label. The guys there really do go the extra mile to ensure that things run smoothly, and that their bands are accommodated to. We were, admittedly, pretty skeptical when we were first presented with the opportunity to release an album with them, as many people hear "Punkcore" and immediately attach the spiky-haired street punk stigma, which for a long time was all that the label was doing. Being a more politically-motivated band, we were a little anxious about the kind of reactions we'd get from a lot of people whom we share the same interests with, mainly the hardcore/anarcho crowd. But, it turned out to be pretty fucking great in the end.

None of us can really make heads or tails of a band like the Havoc. Most of us are very serious atheists, and none of us are religious by any stretch of the imagination. As such, we're all finding it very hard to comprehend a "punk" band that adheres to the archaic principles of a vindictive or repressive institution. In short, punk means liberation, Christianity means assimilation. Kind of like fire and water, don't you think? It would be fascinating to hear the Havoc explain the system they've devised that cancels out the conflicting ideologies. However, good for them for putting their balls on the chopping block and giving it a shot anyway.

MRR: So, it sounds like you guys seriously contemplated how signing to Punkcore would affect the way Action was perceived. Is there anything you do to make sure you maintain your own identity as a band? Is it important that Action is seen as a step apart from your peers on the label?

Action: Absolutely, not only it that important to us as a band, but also as basic human beings. Maybe it has something to do with the age group of a lot of kids out there who're into Action and other Punkcore bands, but there seems to be a disturbing trend towards idol-worship in some cases. Take, for example, the legions of punk kids out there who call themselves "Zach Casualty." That's no different than the teeming masses of Brittany Spears fans. None of this was what we were looking for when we signed to Punkcore.

Here in Toronto, the majority of gigs we play are smaller-venue hardcore gigs. We didn't set out to be a "leather-jacket" band, and in most cases, it seems people recognize that. Maybe that's how we separate ourselves from our peers? We managed to start out right, and initially garnered an audience that under any other circumstances wouldn't give us the time of day.

MRR: A lot of American bands have problems getting over the "open" boarder into Canada. Have you guys had problems doing the reverse journey to tour the US?

Action: Some of us have been over to places like Detroit. Getting into the US was surprisingly easier than getting back into our own country. Canadian border guards are prissy spastics with too much time on their hands. Andy and Mark's other band, Riot 99, had their entire ride gutted, and each member was interrogated individually. It didn't seem to matter that we were all Canadian-born citizens *and* residents, they treated us like terrorists at an American airport.

MRR: What differences do you guys see between the punk scenes up North as opposed to in the States?

Action: It's hard to say. Here in Canada, the major cities are so far apart that each city has a drastically different scene. In Edmonton, it seems so positive, the community spirit is overwhelming, whereas you'll play to 20 kids getting fucked up at the back of the club with their t-shirts soaked in gas in Vancouver. Toronto can be fun when there's a good all-ages gig that's well promoted enough so all the kids come out of the surrounding suburbs, though otherwise it's almost not worth mentioning. The States seems to be pretty tight knit, and it looks like the numbers of punks in states like Cali are through the fucking roof. Boston seems to have a strong scene as well.

Action gets nothing but positive feedback from American scenes, and it seems like we'll be in for a blast when we tour there. Honestly, it's hard to get much recognition in Canada, the scenes are just too few and far between in most cases.

Contact: www.actionpunks.com

THE XRATED

MRR: Who is in the X-RATED and what does each of you do?

Kyle: I play guitar, Steve plays bass, Rick is our drummer, and Sam sings.

MRR: How long has the band been together?

Kyle: We got together about two years ago, but we have only been doing shows for the past year or so.

MRR: You guys are from Florida, how's the scene there?

Kyle: It's very slow these days, but things are looking up! That's why we don't play a lot-it's very hard to get a show here.

MRR: Since punk rock doesn't pay the bills, what do you guys do for a living?

Kyle: I do nothing-I just sit and watch TV. Rick works for the city, Sam is in school, and Steve is a manager at a restaurant.

MRR: Do you guys have any releases?

Kyle: Yes, we just did a demo tape but it's now sold out of the 100 copies that we made.

What are your influences?

Kyle: The d-beat and bands that play it, like DISCHARGE, DISARM, and CRUCIFIX.

MRR: Are you guys planning to go on tour soon?

Kyle: We would love to, but two members can't really leave 'cause of jobs and kids. But we will try to do a show in Savannah soon. We can only leave for the weekends.

MRR: Are any of you guys in any other bands?

Kyle: Yes, I'm in another band-its called CRISPCRACK. No one else in the band has any other bands

MRR: What's with the name of the band, what does it mean?

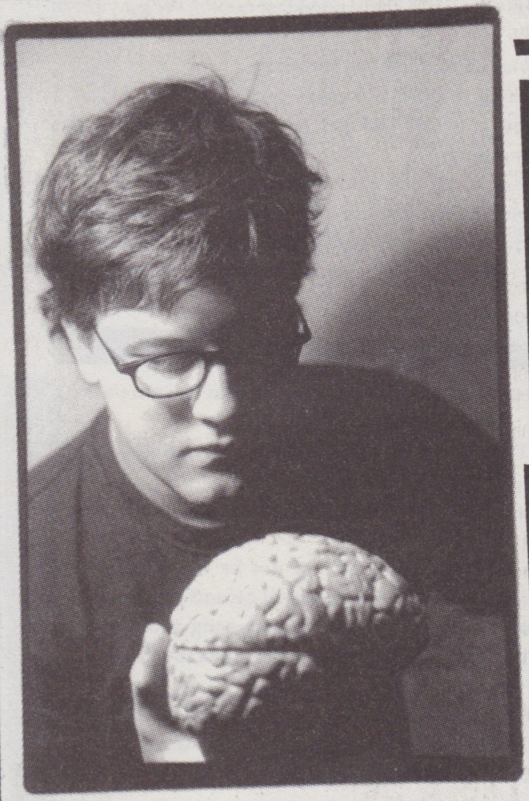
Kyle: I don't know we were stupid and drunk one night. The name came out and we laughed, so we kept it

MRR: Any last words?

Kyle: We will try our best next year to tour the US, and we will have an EP coming out next spring. The EP is going to be self-released.

Feel free to email us for shows in Florida:
the_x_ratedpunks@hotmail.com

THE ERGS!



A few weeks ago my friend told me she was dating a "pop-punk kid." Knowing the status of the pop-punk scene these days, I asked Joey Erg, "Hey, do you know this kid, I figured you would since there's only (quick count in my head comes up a little small) 30 of you" Joe was like, "No, and there's only twenty of us—four bands a couple of girl friends, all the bands share members." Interview by Bill Florio.

MRR: So, being a band from New Jersey, doesn't that sorta start you at a disadvantage? People already think all bands from New Jersey suck.

Mikey: Yeah there was ADRENALIN OD and then us, that's about it.

MRR: You can't get a show in the Bay Area?

Joe: Some dude just told us to show up at Gilman at like five and they will….

MRR: No no, you can't do that. They seem pretty strict about stuff like that, like showing up on time.

Mikey: It always seemed fishy to me because you have to send them your lyrics in advance. How can you show the lyrics beforehand if you show up at five?

MRR: Maybe if yer like the "cool" band you can get away with that.

Mikey: If yer ISOCRACY.

MRR: So you haven't played on the west coast yet?

Joe: They went to the BLACK FLAG reunion last year.

Mikey: Please don't bring that up. We had fun in the lobby, just hanging out.

Matt Army: We drank beer with Sean Cole in the lobby.

Jeff: Greg Ginn, Dez Cadena, and a drum machine did "Nervous Breakdown."

Matt Army: There was just bass track on dat.

Jeff: That's like something a pop band does, when you're auditioning for a pop band, "Can you play to a dat, can you play to a sequencer?"

MRR: So what kind of musical training do you guys have?

Mikey: We're all self-taught.

Joe: I had a year of bass lessons. See the thing is, I met these guys in high school and they had both been playing since they were six. So to catch up with them, I took lessons for a year, then I could almost play with these guys.

MRR: So what happened with Chris Pierce (from DOC HOPPER) I heard he tried out to be in THE ERGS. He wears glasses, he plays the punk…

Mikey: He was all into the idea of being in the band, and then when we brought it up to him again he kinda forgot about the idea.

MRR: That's not what he told me.

Mikey: What did he tell you?

MRR: He told me he didn't wanna be the guy in the band that sucked.

Jeff: Yeah we played with him once, we practiced with him, and then after that he kinda lost interest and we were like "What the fuck?" I thought that he thought *we* sucked and didn't wanna play with us.

Joe: That's pretty funny.

Mikey: That's really nice, I love you Chris Pierce.

Joe: I think getting back to the original question, we're not sittin' on the fence, we're tryin' ta burn it down really. No, no. There are a ton of good bands from New Jersey. We can list em now!

MRR: If you go home and think about it?

Joe: There's this band HUNCHBACK, they're awesome

Mikey: DRAMARAMA

Joe: No, they suck.

Jeff: There's a band called JERSEY.

Mikey: THURSDAY, no they suck.

Joe; THE DEGENERICS, always been awesome. BUZZKILL was cool, STORMSHADOW

MRR: STORMSHADOW is ex-SHEMPS! Anyway, have you ever been threatened with violence?

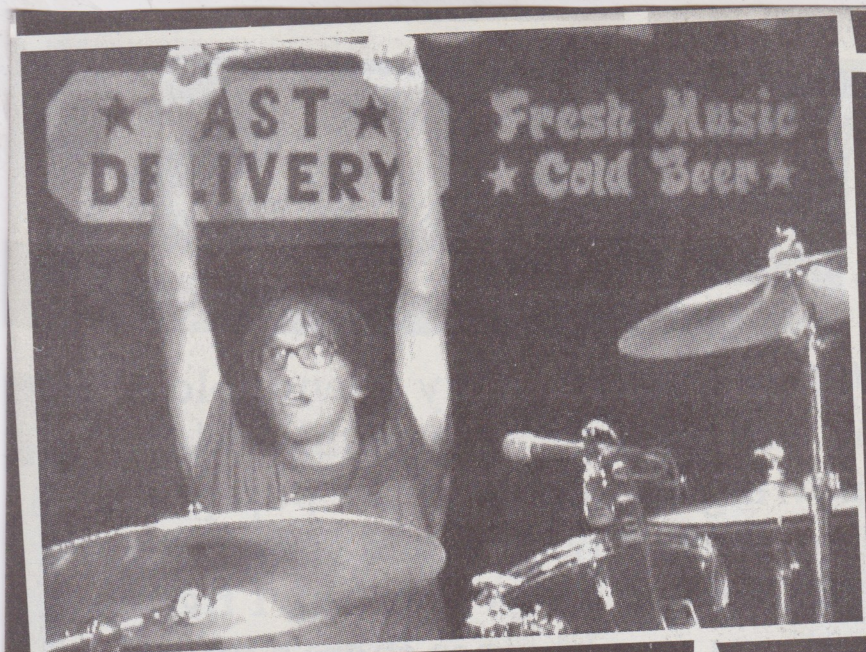
Jeff: We're had stuff thrown at us on stage, like lit cigarettes and stuff.

Joe: We did get gobbed on a lot when we played Screen on the Green in London in '76.

Jeff: Can you put a parenthetical remark in now that Mike is drinking a 32 ounce?

[Mikey is drinking a 32 Ounce]

Mikey: We played the Christmas on Earth festival, and while we were playing the repo



MRR: When ya go to family gatherings do any of your annoying relatives ask, "Hey ya making any money with that band?" "How much?" "$20? Each?"

Joe: Yeah we go to people's houses and set up our stuff in their basements. "You have no life"

Jeff: Any mystique of family member being in a band is destroyed.

Mikey: "Yeah we play in their, breakfast nook." We play pizza shops.

MRR: I've played pizza shops for pizza.

Joe: We're playing 3 pizza places on tour.

MRR: Maybe you can just get a sponsorship from Papa Johns or something.

Joe: That would be an incredible tour.

MRR: Maybe you just need to write some more songs about pizza. Maybe you haven't really thought this whole thing out. I mean, none of Mike's ex-girlfriends are gonna sponsor your tour.

Jeff: Two of his ex girlfriends still like the band and made us care packages.

MRR: BUGOUT SOCIETY tried to get ones from White Castle, Grays Papaya, Chocolate Cow.

Joe: Yeah, you have an inordinate amount of food songs. Like punk rock Weird Al.

MRR: When you wanna write funny stuff and not be offensive you have to stick to food, just about everything else will offend someone or another. We were all kinda fat too, we knew what we sang about well. Hey Mike, how many bands are you in eight? Why can't ya say no when someone asks ya?

Mikey: I end up doing a lot of shit that I really don't wanna do. Because I can't say no to people. Like doing sessions for bands I don't really like.

MRR: I see things like, there's band people and non-band people, Are you guys band people?

Mikey: What do you mean?

MRR: When you go on tour do you just sleep all day in the van?

Jeff: We buy records all day.

MRR: You don't go see the large balls of string?

Mikey: We do.

Joe: We would if we had some time, but it's always ten hours to the next

place came and repossessed the van we were touring in and none of the other bands would help us, like VICE SQUAD wouldn't help us…

MRR: Do you think it's possible to read too many punk rock history books?

Mikey: The ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE wouldn't help us. And we didn't even think to ask THE DAMNED or THE UK SUBS to help us!

Joe: One time we were doing our BLACKFLAG-covers-at-the-end-of-the-set thing, and he fuckin' went off on us, he just started throwing punches, he broke my glasses…

Jeff: That was in Ohio right?

Joe: He just went off on us, we were singing "My War"…

MRR: It seems you guys use the scientific method to become a punk rock band. It's like, oh we're going to hypothesize what type of music we like, do research, and then come up with a theory.

Jeff: We're going to read these five coffee table books…

MRR: Don't you realize that the fourteen-year olds that like THE ERGS are never gonna understand what yer talking about?

Mikey: Fourteen year olds? Its forty-one year old dudes that like us.

MRR: Jim Testa is fifty-one. [comments are made that I haven't asked a question yet]

MRR: Ok, so how did this band get started?

Jeff: Mikey and I we're in a band. In '95, we played our first show.

Mikey: A band called the FLATLINERS, he joined THE FLATLINERS, I left the FLATLINERS, then we were THE FLATLINERS for a while..

MRR: Were you any good?

Mikey: No, VANDALS like… It was terrible. We were all like fourteen or fifteen.

MRR: So originally you were in a normal pop punk band that sucks.

Mikey: Yeah, exactly. Then he (Jeff) wanted to start playing pop punk again cuz he was sick of playing jammy shit with his brother…

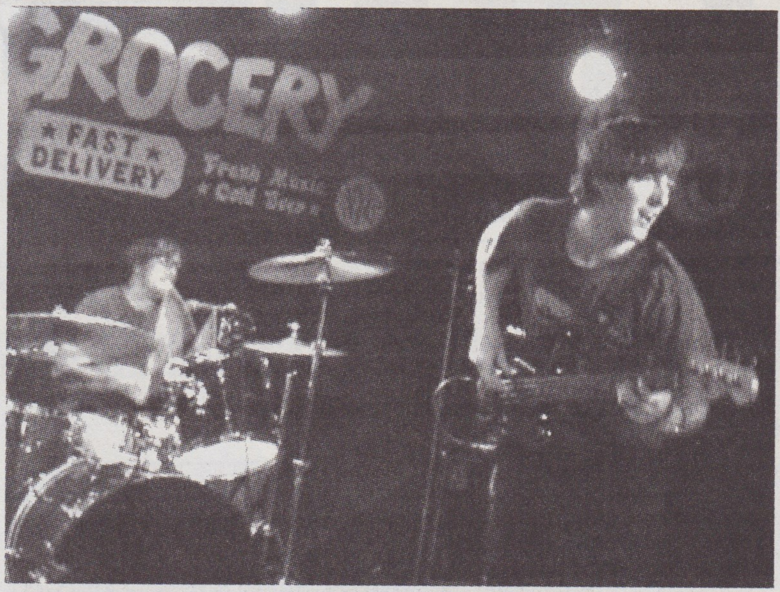
MRR: Do you hate CRIMPSHRINE?

Mikey: I don't personally like them.

MRR: It just seemed to me like you do.

Mikey: The FLATLINERS basically just disintegrated and we decided to play together, as the three of us. We went through a series of names, and when we got to ERGS we decided to do it professionally. [Laugh] As in, instead of practicing once every three months, we practiced once every week.

Jeff: Definition, Lose money on.



show.

MRR: So your not really band people, you just booked a really shitty tour. I'll ask you again next year.

Joe: We do have a day off in Minneapolis on this tour.

Jeff: I don't wanna say we take our band seriously, cuz all bands that say that suck, but it's what we are the most about.

Joe: I'm very flippant!

Mikey: He's pretty fickle.

MRR: Have you guys gotten into any good fights with each other?

Mikey: It's always stupid stuff, like whether DRAMARAMA's good.

Jeff: No, DRAMARAMA sucks.

MRR: How about what's worse Billy Joel or Bruce Springsteen?

Jeff: Bruce Springsteen or Bon Jovi, yes!

Mikey: We fight like brothers cuz we're totally brothers.

MRR: This is the shit-talking part of the interview. Can you tell me some bands you really don't like?

Joe: I hate NEW FOUND GLORY and all that stuff, the stuff that makes it hard for us as a pop punk band to get shows. Cuz when you call someone up like out of BYOFL and say, we're pop punk, they assume yer some dude with frosted tips and a trailer on the back of your moms Lexus, like, great! We have street team in the area!

MRR: Maybe you can just call yourself something else.

Joe: Yeah we've tried thrash-pop or something like that. It doesn't work though.

Dan (Dirt Bike Annie): Is this a documentary about THE ERGS?

Mikey: No it's an MRR interview Dirt Bike Annie, that's old news.

Jeff: We're in the shit-talking portion of the interview.

Dan: Tell everyone that we suck.

Mikey: DIRT BIKE ANNIE is far better now than they ever were! Dan! I was at Shop Rite the other day?

MRR: Really? Why?

Mikey: Because I work there and there's this guy in a Show us your Demons T-Shirt and I had no idea who this guy was.

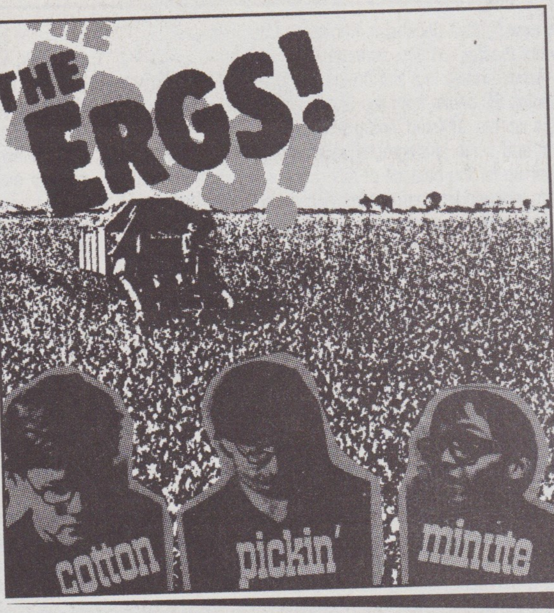
MRR: I was outside a Pathmark in the Bronx after midnight and some guido in a pickup was blasting KRAUT. I was thinking maybe it was the CIV cover, but it wasn't, I figured it must be someone who was in the band or his offspring. So anyhow after one of the ERGS dies in a van crash on tour how big do you think you will get?

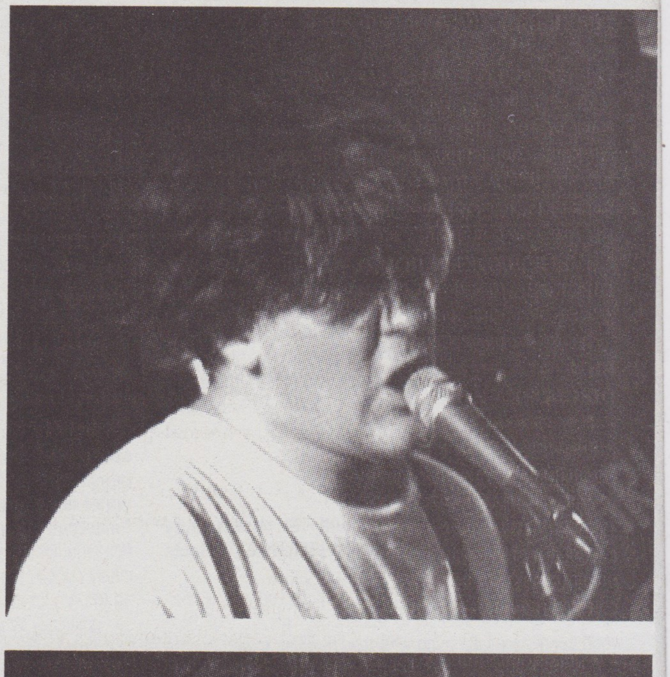
Mikey: We'll be playing Madison Square Garden,

Jeff: Actually we'll be playing the basement of Madison Square Garden.

Joe. Maybe if we're lucky we'll play in someone's vegetable Garden in Madison, Wisconsin.

http://www.dorkrockcorkrod.com





RUSTY NAILS

QUALITY GENRE FILMMAKING ON HORROR, ROCK, AND TEENS? SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE, BUT RUSTY NAILS HAS JUST CRANKED OUT A TEENSPLOITATION FLICK FOR THE AGES.

Interview by Alan Jacobson. Photos by Chuck Przybyl.

Darken theater, roll film, settle in.

Acne! lurches to a start in the grand style of one of those crackling EC books from the 50s; a man sinks into a gutter, gazes at his afflicted limb, screams, run title! Gorgeous black-and-white photography and a stinger like that key the viewer up for the balance of this raucous, economical, intelligent, independent horror film, dealing heavily in ideas and symbolism as any genre work worth its salt ought to.

* * *

Arab on Radar, Erase Errata, Scream Club, The Goblins, Evil Beaver, and Tilt have all commissioned Rusty Nails to make videos for them. An individualistic iconoclast who manages to honor the past he loves and uses, Rusty is the ultimate punk rock filmmaker. And his new independent horror film, *Acne!*, something of a *Night of the Living Dead* for our corporate age is chock-a-block with punk's spirit and sounds—with aural appearances ranging from the Dead Kennedys to the Lunachicks and the wilder and woollier in between.

I am no longer young enough to be a wild punk-rocker, but I know Rusty Nails simply because to live in Chicago and be interested in film is to know Rusty. His enthusiastic personality pervades not only his energetic films and videos, but his conversation as well. As easygoing and engaging to a total stranger as he is to his closest friend, each feels like they are getting Rusty's all, and each is probably right. It was at his house and later at a street side cafe that I spoke with Rusty, this ease creating in a professional meeting the aura of a lunch date with an old friend. We discussed many things, but most notably his new feature, a film he worked on for five years, ingratiating himself to over 250 people in the process of getting a crystal-sharp genre piece made.

* * *

Interior, Rusty's house:

Stiff Little Fingers' *Gotta Getaway* spins in the background, the rock informing the conversation just as it colors *Acne!* The film has been out just a month. Hosting George Romero, Jack Hill, and Lloyd Kaufmann at festivals celebrating their work burnt Rusty out to the point where his promotional skills were tapped. But a man who shares more with Orson Welles than just his star sign cannot be kept down long.

Cut to interview, cue punk filmmaker persona:

MRR: *Acne*, **symbolic of teen threat, the unpleasantly visible part of adolescence. Why a plague that affects teens only?**

Rusty Nails: Good question. I'm very interested in the phenomenon of "adolescence to adulthood." It's at that time when people are becoming who they're going to be. They're finding their place and ideals, but at the same time, they're still children. It's at that point in time when you become aware of what society's like. You're getting into junior high and understanding group and clique dynamics. Clubs at school. All these different things where kids join these sects. You also become more aware of politics. Politics sort of hit you; the teaching of history focuses more on current events, generally. You start forming opinions of what is going on in the world. But at the same time you're still a kid, still playing, just this tactile being, you still are lawless, go out and do whatever you want. Not eighteen yet, don't have to think about registering, you continue to be a kid, have this great lawlessness that children have. But at the same time, your parents start enforcing a different set of rules: "If you're going to go out with these people, then you have to be back at this time. And don't drink." Which you hadn't really even thought of before, just that so many things, so many changes, and with this new set of rules, new set of awareness, you're becoming this sort of Frankenstein creation of different things that are going on, where Frankenstein has this new birth into the world, this innocence, but on the other hand has other people's pasts, which are being bred into him. It's a really simple time, then it's also—for me, at least—it was also a crushing time. Also, with junior high and high school, it's where you learn about the brutality that other kids are capable of. There's this rage other kids have. This bizarre rage.

MRR: Disconnection...confusion...on the scene where the preacher has the Peanuts teacher voice...is this kind of what you're trying to express? Especially with the authority figures pushing things on kids.

RN: Gobbledeegook. He's just saying a lot of garbage and at the end he's doing a lot of hand movements where he's just wrapping things up at the end. I'm sort of working on another script that's all about the way adolescents are sort of formed. Has a lot to do with the connection of adolescents and how they become adults, having a lot of adults in it, but you never see their faces.

MRR: So you'll become the "teen threat" filmmaker, the go-to guy for the teen films?

RN: I wouldn't necessary be against that.

MRR: If you have an understanding for it, why not? It would be better than a lot of the stuff that's out there about teens.

RN: Maybe it's because I'm locked into the teenage years, both in a good way and a bad way. I'm also interested in the dynamics of how boys and girls relate with each other.

MRR: The Politics of `Acne` are pretty blatant without being obvious or insulting, because there are more subtle forces at work, room for the listener to think, such as your choice to shoot a close up of Zooey's peace ring as he chugs a cup of corporate-infected water and collapses. What's your rule on staying subtle versus going overt?

RN: What I tried to do...there were certain things that are definitely right in front of you, but there are other things I wanted to be a lot more subtle with. I am a pretty motivated person politically. When I do things in a political way, I almost feel that those things are anti-political things. It's like, writing an intelligent female character is very political, but at the same time I feel it's in no way political, because women *are* intelligent, so how is that political? But it ends up being political because there are so few intelligent female characters in film. In a way, I feel that nothing I write is political because everything the government does is ignorant, backward, and motivated by power and monetary lust. In a way, it's almost like nothing's political, but everything is. In the end, the most important thing for me is to making sure that everyone [in my films] is intelligent. People that appear stupid to you—like if you have any enemies—people that are ignorant towards you, do ignorant things that appear stupid to you. But I tell you, I've known a couple stupid people in my life [laughter] that seemed pretty dumb, but there are things that people like that do that are so manipulative and controlling, so organized in their deceit that a while ago I came to the conclusion that they're not ignorant or stupid, they're...

MRR: It's more like they're deformed rather than stupid.

RN: Right.

* * *

All right, fits nicely into the horror aesthetic....or the true horror of people doing awful things not because they're desperate or ignorant, but because, stemming from the darker side of human nature, they want to. Scary stuff. To brighten a bit, we'll conveniently shift scene to a sunny exterior, a street side cafe. Rusty feeds birds, I ask about *Acne!*, he answers, and it all works out as a nice way to spend an afternoon.

MRR: Music, and more particularly, the *rock*, seems very important to you. Do you use it because you feel it expresses something deeper, as countless philosophers have suggested? Or is there something else at work here?

RN: Music is almost more inspirational for me than film. Music can stir more emotions. I can listen to the same song thousands of times where I can't watch the same film thousands of times. For *Acne!*, the music was very specific. Zooey awakens to "Moon over Marin," a Dead Kennedys song about the land's deterioration through chemicals and pollutants; this obviously informs what's going on. It's a radio alarm. Part of the film is about how these adolescents are becoming politically aware. And some of it is used because it's funny, like a goofy take on Jingle Bells for the bowling scene. Every song is important, be it for comic or lyric effect.

MRR: Adding dimension and emotion rather than saying "isn't this song cool."

RN: Right. When we were doing the soundtrack, we worked on it for two years. Song after song for scene after scene. Some were just right, but there was a lot of hunting. Fortunately, the music was small label, so it was easier to get. A good portion is composed. We had two great composers, Scott Lamberdy and Lisa Brandt. And both of them, I'd sit with for hours. I'd be like "I need some tympani here, less rolls here." The soundtrack was really, really important, as it moves the film along. And I love a lot of great composers like Bernard Herrmann.

MRR: The Ramones-styled Acne tune—was this an inspiration for the film?)

RN: That was written with my band, The Creeps.

MRR: Was that the germ of the idea, then?

MRR: It was weird, because I thought of the concept for the film much before I was in the band and I think it was some weird serendipitous coincidence. I thought of the concept, nothing was written for a few years but hadn't really thought of the name, and was in the band between that time. I wrote the song, "Acne," and it was perfect for that scene. I just love those 1930s "showcase" films where in the middle of the film, "ladies and gentlemen, Y'ma Sumac," because for me, one of the greatest things about film is creating this new existence, this fantasy place. And I hope to make a film one day that has musical numbers. And I added this to express the mayhem; I'm a big fan of it in the Marx Brothers films.

MRR: Iconography plays a heavy part in any genre work, such as the choice of the names, Franny and Zooey. What about these names, and perhaps Salinger's story appeals to you? How does it parallel *Acne!*?

RN: The reason I chose the names was that I like his work a lot, and my *Franny & Zooey* are definitely different than Salinger's. But they're similar in that they're both questioning the circumstances of their lives. Mine are lower-middle class versus his. But the confusion of being an adolescent, the beauty and questioning of being, they're similar. One of the reasons that there are a number of literary references is that I wanted to add something different to a genre piece, a lot of smart as well as ridiculous acknowledgements because I felt like it wasn't done very often.

MRR: Adding depth, like with the music.

RN: Right. I had so many interests and ideas that I wanted to start off with...because I basically financed the film myself and I'm a person with very minimal cash resources, I felt like this might be my only chance to make a feature film. I wanted to go for broke, give it as much complexity, as many layers, as much loving care, as much reckless abandon as possible. I figured that since I'm producing it and there's no hand over me telling me what I can or can't do, I should put everything I want in it and not worry about any censure...Go full out and put as much craziness, love, and insanity into it. The picture can be framed as horror, or sci-fi, or noir, or American New Wave, but I feel like it's something new unto itself. Basically I just wanted total freedom. In making this little $16,000 film, that I did have that: total freedom. But, then again, I also took five years to produce, because I was just putting in $3,000/year.

MRR: How long was the actual shooting?

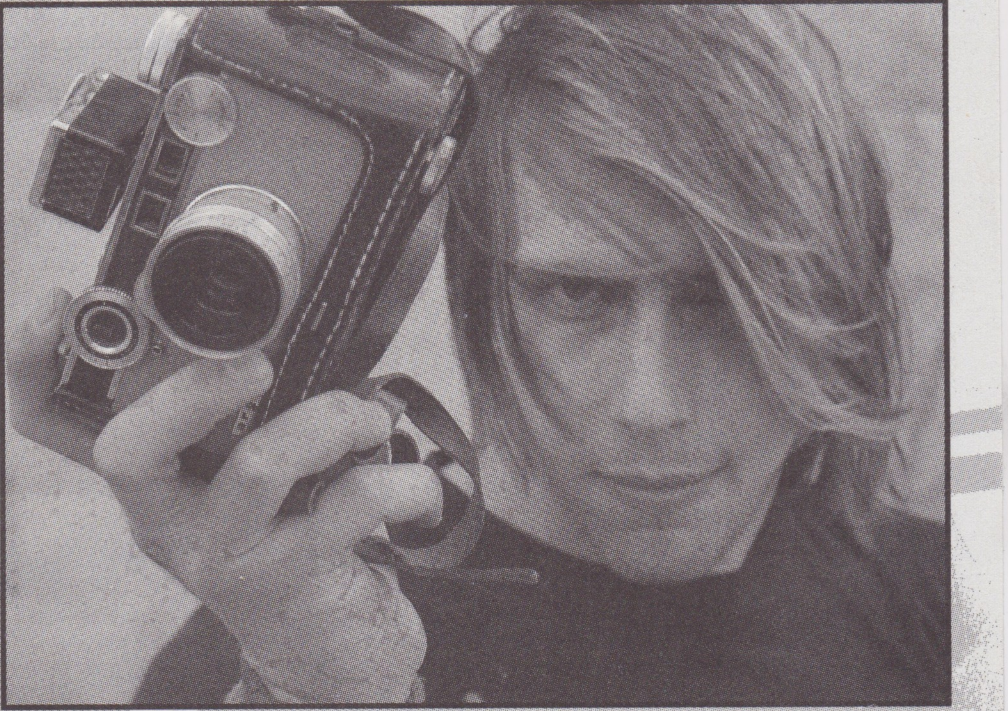
Well, the initial script, my first, needed a lot of work. I would end up cutting about twenty minutes out of the film and shooting another twenty minutes. Initially, I wanted it to be a 90-minute film because I felt that's how long a feature is, but I asked myself as time went on, is it more important to make a regular film or to make the best film that this film's going to be? Why adhere to a length, some baloney that film fests and distributors want, when it might ruin the film.

MRR: Fine production values, such as the New Jersey Post headline declaring a ban on candy sales to teens. Was this difficult to keep up with such a small budget?

I just felt like we really had to, even though it is low-budget, people really love films. Doctors, lawyers, a lot of people want to be in films. Maybe their dreams, on the side of their regular jobs, is to be a part of that magic reality. To act, play, create this new reality. I was lucky to find over 275 people who helped when they realized I was dead serious about making this film. People really respect that, when you're intent is serious and you love it, a lot of people are ready to add to that. People trust you a lot more when you have that faith in the project, are willing to donate. I lived with a really great artist, Patrick Ruillier, who did the really beautiful painting (video cover). He's an amazing artist. I went to these painstaking lengths to make sure the film would be the best it could be. I had to, or I just blew five years. Everything was direly important. We paid a lot of attention to detail. I was lucky to know a lot of skilled and great and generous people.

MRR: The grocery store guy, the psychic, all the locations—how do you drum it all up? Are people anxious to be in films? *Do* you need to stay on top of them? It seems like this, in addition to heart, is the secret to independent film. Elaborate.

RN: Yeah, for sure. The lead actress and myself definitely had a lot of squabbles, and one of the camera people—we had a good number of arguments. Fortunately, the film is episodic, and spans a portion of the Northeast, even though it was shot in the Midwest. So the thing about it being episodic is that people are around for a day or two. They're not going to get too annoyed. I also worked with a lot of teenagers and younger people, they're first film, they don't realize how boring a film set can get, but at the same time, there's a lot of energy, budding romances, stuff like that. A mixture of professionals, semi-professionals, and people who hadn't acted before...and I think everyone was really great, except for maybe two people. So I rehearsed them on set twenty times, which was good for everyone, and the film, especially.



MRR: It's not an ego thing.

RN: Not about that, it's about making sure the film works. Because if it doesn't, in the end, the film is going to suffer and it won't get shown. That's not good for anyone. I'm very into collaboration, the electricity and energy of a film set, even the frustration of pushing through it.

MRR: Nice camerawork as well—the beautiful, low angle shot of the Mershey's factory, as well as similar shots of afflicted kids tromping through the woods. Does it take an incredible amount of time and patience to coax these images, or just working with good people you trust?

I'm very specific. I want the shot itself to be part of the story. The framing is very important in generating an idea within a story. It's painstaking. In the execution, I will say what I need, and the cameraperson will put the shot together. I'm a very visual person, and to me it's very important that the visuals are a part of the story. Everything works together as a whole. I believe in the idea of the "total filmmaker," as Jerry Lewis said. Something like 80% of the time, I know exactly what I want; if the cameraperson has an idea and we have enough film and enough time, we'll definitely try it out.

MRR: It sounds like it's definitely a matter of respect. You're not going to be like, "hey, Gordon Willis, shut up, this is my film!"

RN: There have been moments where a cameraman has told me, "Well, I don't know about that". I respond that I understand that, but this is what needs to be done for the story. Again, it goes beyond the ego—ego has to be thrown away...

MRR: Especially if you've written it, lived with it for years, have it completely visualized.

RN: Right. Sometimes people get frustrated because some directors will be like, "I need a wide shot, make one." I'm very precise: "I need the wide shot to include these details and I need to see the actors positioned like this". And it can be very frustrating because they've only worked with the less-specific kind of director. Again, I have to be concerned with the film, the story.

MRR: The intertitle, what happened to that footage? Is this homage to the lost pieces of great films or just a shot that was lost forever? Or don't you want to say?

RN: It comes about because I love in-camera effects—though this isn't one. Tape, Vaseline, slow, fast...I like silent films, intertitles, and I talked to my friend Mark who made a really pretty intertitle, a nice way to connect the pieces. Again, not worrying about the "rules" of narrative cinema, just doing whatever would be great for the story.

MRR: You've done rock videos and have just pulled together a tight, quality low-budget feature. How did you do this? Any words of inspiration for others who might want to do the same?

RN: Maintaining your original vision is the most important of all things. That and respecting the people you work with. Because it's rare I get to pay anyone although I'd like to get to that point. Paying or nonpaying, respecting your crew, cast, and self is really important. Showering them with compliments goes a long way. Mark Twain said, "I could live a week off a compliment." Just saying thank you four times a day will be enough payment. There have been times...my cameraman, Dave Russell who worked for us for free, generally gets like $600-800/day for a project. We had an argument. He mentioned I hadn't paid him. I offered him $50 because that's all I had. We had been done arguing; he appreciated the gesture. The argument had ended. He knew it was like $1000 for me, so he cast it aside.

Also, don't bow down to the idea of narrative structure, the idea of selling your project. If you have an idea that's filled with fresh concepts and people say, "I don't know, that's pretty weird." If you feel really strongly about the ideas, you have to go with them. If you're doing it just to be stubborn, then listen to other people. But, please stick with your ideas, they don't want cookie-cutter film #6,562. Somebody like David Lynch didn't get to make *Elephant Man* because of suck up ideas. John Waters. Darren Aaronofsky.

MRR: But it is a popular suggestion, though, to sell your film as "Shrek, but better...?" Is it a matter of staying true to yourself despite popular mythology?

RN: Yes.

MRR: Will there be an *Acne! II*?

RN:I don't know if we need one. Maybe some kind of deconstructive analysis of why something like this would have happened. But characters get older, stories become different things.

MRR: You don't want to milk something just to milk it, even though it is a genre trope.

Right. But I do like the idea of a continuing story, of seeing characters that I like again, another genre thing. Though, unfortunately a number of times those continuations have been bad ideas.

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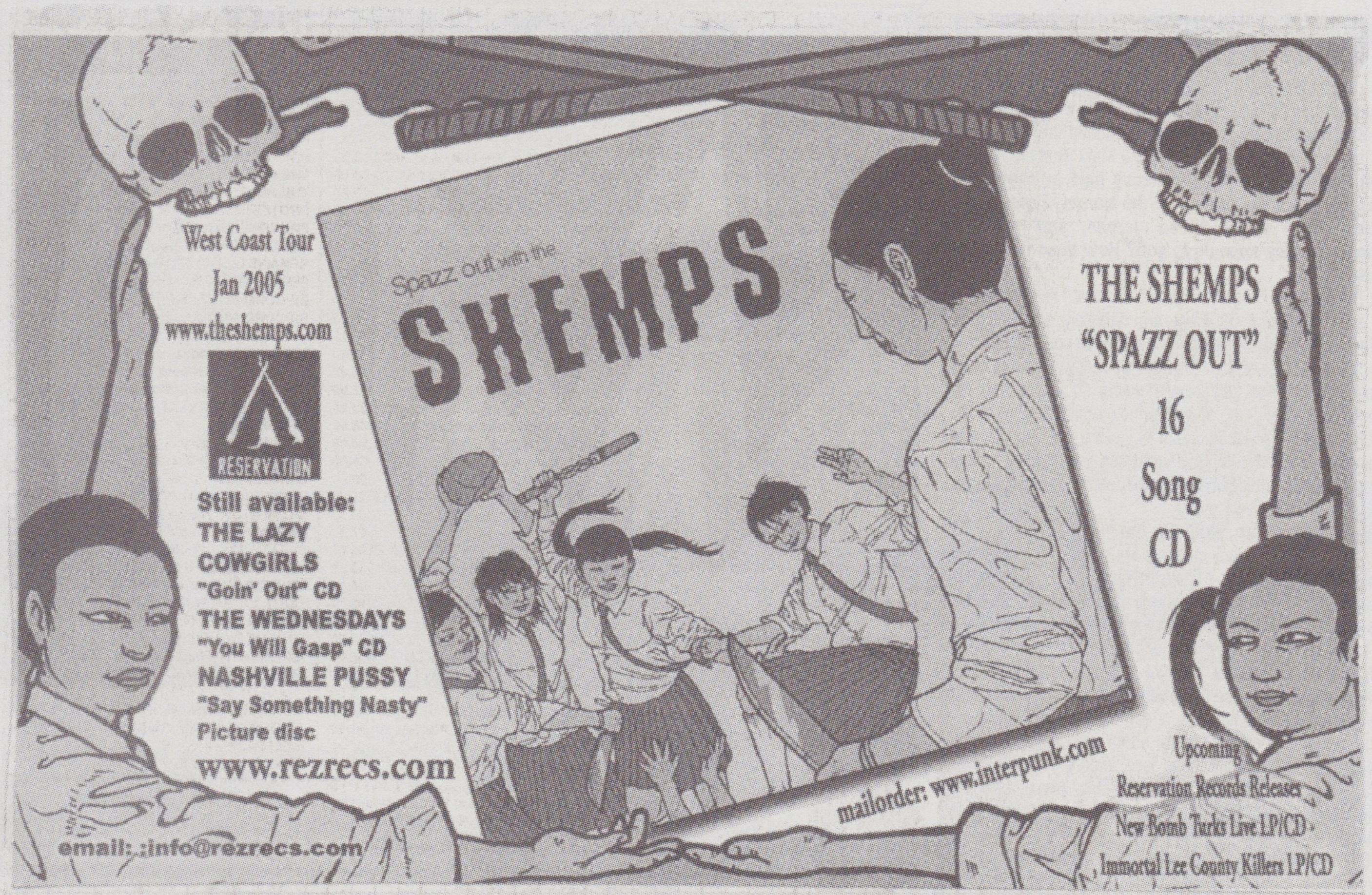

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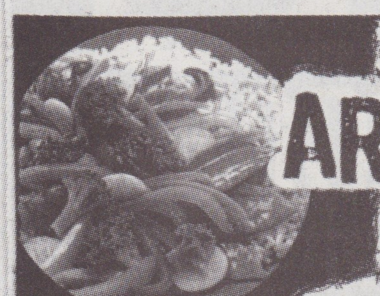

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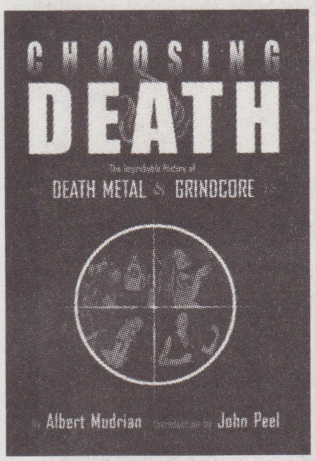

Choosing Death: The Improbable History of Death Metal & Grindcore
Albert Mudrian
285 pages • $19.95
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I have to admit- I was pretty depressed upon finishing *Choosing Death*. This definitive argument-ender is so complete in its coverage of the origins of the art form that has resonated most powerfully throughout my life that there was seemingly little left to explore within the genre after completing the read. Pathetic as it may sound, I've had more than a few discussions with friends on such topics as who played the first blast beat, who had the first legitimate death growl, and who could rightfully be considered the first real death metal band. Now, alas, there is no more wonder in the world- nothing left uncertain, no myths and legends of arms coming disengaged from their sockets and rocketing across the stage during the initial test phases of that mighty leveler of drum patterns- the blast beat. *Choosing Death: The Improbable History of Death Metal & Grindcore* is about as good, accurate and comprehensive a tribute as any long-term fan of the genre could hope to find; now all that remains is to hit the E-Bay and re-issue circuits in search of those long-lost time-capsule demos that started it all in the mid '80s.

Mudrian treats the development of grindcore both chronologically and by location, beginning in the dingy clubs of West Midlands, England of '81/'82 where a trio of friends, inspired by the movie *Apocalypse Now*, settled on the name Napalm Death for their first band. From there, the path of destruction jumps back and forth across the Atlantic- to the equally blue-collar tracts of Boston, Mass and Flint, Michigan; down to the sweltering death metal hotbed of Tampa, Florida; and back again to Sweden, whose own unique scene was in its incipient stage. The story of grindcore is unavoidably the story of one label and one band, those being of course, Earache Records and its founder Digby Pearson- who had the good taste and fortune to be at ground zero when these bands exploded- and its flagship band, Napalm Death. At least half of the book is dedicated to the rise, fall and resurrection(s) of these two institutions and not without due cause- between the pair, they held direct or indirect connections to virtually every single band in the scene worldwide.

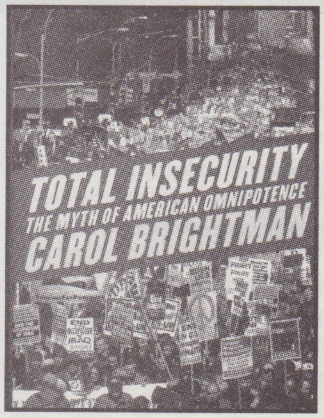
Just so MRR readers don't get a mistaken impression- this book is as much about the grind as it is the metal, and it may serve as some surprise just how intrinsically tied its origins are to punk and hardcore. Napalm Death's earliest influences are cited as Crass, Discharge and Siege (as well as Celtic Frost). Classic show fliers depict Napalm regularly sharing bills with the likes of Disorder, Amebix, Antisect, Subhumans and Chaos Uk, plus it was actually Crass who released Napalm Death's first recorded song on the Crass Records *Bullshit Detector #3* double LP, way back in 1982. The book even includes several reprints from *Maximum Rocknroll* itself, of articles on seminal Boston punks Siege from 1983 and Napalm Death, in which they rather unintuitively cite The Ex as "the only band [we] sound remotely like". And the tales of friendships and rivalries between such early British fastcore bands as Heresy, Extreme Noise Terror, Concrete Sox and Napalm are endearing in their evocation of an extremely tight-knit and like-minded community seeking only to outdo each other within the confines of this new and exciting form of expression.

The only detraction to *Choosing Death*, and it's a minor one at worst, is the occasionally dry writing style which is primarily resultant from Mudrian's steadfast objectivity throughout. Perhaps all too aware of the tendency in the extreme metal press to resort to hyperbolic superlatives every time a new land-speed record is broken, Mudrian over-compensates a bit by almost never interjecting his own personal taste or opinion. This is of course fundamentally a good, well-disciplined trait, but in this case, the obvious familiarity and expertise the author possesses on the subject matter would certainly warrant a few transgressions of biased insight. As it stands though, his history is unblemished and the chapters fly by at a speed comparable to the bands they describe. This is another "positive" complaint- I could have easily stood another hundred pages added to the book's all too-slim-girth. Mudrian still manages to cover an impressive range of related subjects including the pitfalls of major label marriage, the broad world-wide network of the tape-trading underground, the exhausting ego-tripping of grindcore's most visible (and audible) progenitor Mick Harris and even such tangential arcana as the actual chronic physical damage incurred by some musicians from such extreme playing. Such episodes as Cannibal Corpse's meeting with Jim Carrey on the set of *Ace Ventura* and 'Til Tuesday singer Aimee Man selling Siege drummer Robert Williams a Meatmen 7" are worth the cover price alone, but they also had me wishing for more personal anecdotes. One of my favorite sections was the concluding *Life After Death* chapter, a where-are-they-now in which we learn that Mick Harris is currently a music technician at a Technical College and John Tardy, inimitable vocalist for Obituary, is now a network administrator. Exposés such as these and the Morbid Angel Car Wash in Charlotte, NC are simply priceless- juxtaposing their demonic musical personas with their quotidian day jobs to show the human face of inhuman music.

Every major player of the scene is interviewed- Harris, Pearson, Nick Bullen, Justin Broadrick, Scott Carlson, Glen Benton, David Vincent, Nicke Anderson, Robert Williams- plus the introduction is provided by John Peel, the BBC radio 1 DJ credited with giving the likes of Carcass and Napalm Death their first national (and international) exposure. And then there are the photos- Mudrian must have talked every single person he interviewed into giving him a shoebox full of early (and often embarrassingly immature) photos. Seeing the bands pictured in their earliest incarnations- Entombed as Nihilist, Death as Mantas, Repulsion as Genocide- it's striking to realize just how young the members were upon their inception, averaging just fourteen or fifteen years old.

It should be obvious by now, but this is an absolute must-have, must read for anyone even remotely interested in extreme music. At no point in the all-too-brief 285 pages do you find yourself thinking that Mudrian's interest in the genre those aligned with so adamantly defend is anything less than one-hundred percent genuine. Right at the point when you find yourself thinking that he'll overlook some crucial band elemental to the development of the scene, he'll throw in a reference to Ripping Corpse or Fear Of God, and you'll know that Mudrian is simply one of us, writing out of sheer love of the genre and an interest in seeing it properly chronicled. Most importantly though, this is the perfect introduction to the world of grind for the uninitiated- hopefully serving as no small inspiration to seek out and hear these magnificently otherworldly sounds for yourself.

—Elliot Lange



Total Insecurity — The Myth of American Omnipotence

Carol Brightman
268 pages • $25.00
Verso
180 Varick Street
New York, NY 10014-4606
www.versobooks.com

Like most punks in the United States, I hate hippies. I hate the music. I hate the smell. I hate the catch phrases. I hate the food. I hate how they took a movement that had enormous potential for radical change and threw it all away to dance to bad music on worse drugs. And most of all, I hate the nostalgia.

Any college course I take with an instructor over 45-years-old will inevitably reference the 60s. How it was a different era, an era when people paid attention to politics and strove together to make a difference, usually leaving out that their collective work brought us two terms with Nixon, with all that entailed.

And so a book that looks at the United States current fiasco in Iraq, and comparing it with our former fiasco in Vietnam, interspersed with personal reflections of Carol Brightman's 60s activism and how it relates with the activists of today is something else that I will hate, right?

Not necessarily.

Brightman actually manages to not totally romanticize the 60s, instead using her personal recollections to compare with what the U.S as a nation has learned, or in most cases, forgotten. And that scope reaches further into other nations. Do they trust us? Should they? To answer that, she goes into deep analysis.

In these sections, the author truly shines. She provides the statistics to make her point, and manages to present them in a fashion where the casual observer won't fall asleep. In that regard, *Total Insecurity* reads like a modern, non-fiction version of *The Grapes of Wrath* – personal stories interspersed with observations of the corporations that are taking over.

As with any cultural criticism book dealing with the present, and despite her obvious hard work to make this as current and relevant as possible before publication, this suffers from timeliness. The easiest example comes when she notes from a Jan. 12 column in the *Boston Globe* that most economists believe that the stability of the Iraqi government should *lower* energy prices, but the cost of crude oil is now up to $33 a barrel.

Uh, it's now past *$50* a barrel. That only heightens the point that she's making, but it's still disconcerting when you can you can correct her points so easily.

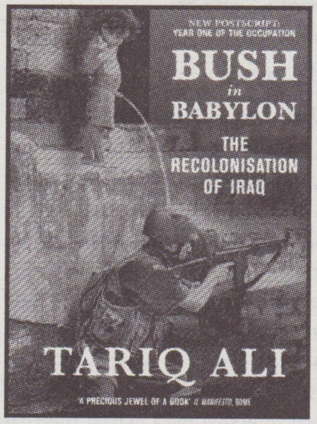
It's things like this that make Brightman include her experiences from the past – those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it, after all. So she examines the state of affairs for the UN and other countries, both during the Vietnam War and how they react to our current tough guy posturing.

Meticulous detail is also provided showing the corporate ties to the military and showing that no matter how many times pundits proclaim that the Iraqi people are the beneficiaries of our benevolence, it is truly the businesses who will thrive and prosper under this new democracy. More important, Brightman outlines how this has happened before.

Sometimes this works in her favor showing the mistakes of the past that still continue today. Other times you question her reasoning. Is the United States reliving the mistakes of the past, or are they trying to alter the perception of the general public while still attempting the same *modus operandi*? She doesn't attempt to answer this, although it seems that she should, and more importantly, *could*.

The bottom line is that while this book is worth reading, both for the nostalgia and the current situation that the world faces, those that are interested in trying to make sense of the situation we now find ourselves in will have to read this book quickly before it *all* simply becomes nostalgia.

—Dean Carrico


NEW POSTSCRIPT: YEAR ONE OF THE OCCUPATION
BUSH in BABYLON
THE RECOLONISATION OF IRAQ
TARIQ ALI
'A PRECIOUS JEWEL OF A BOOK' IL MANIFESTO, ROME

Bush in Babylon: The Recolonisation of Iraq

Tariq Ali
256 pages • $12
Verso
180 Varick Street
NY, NY 10014-4606
versony@versobooks.com

The depiction of an Iraqi boy pissing on a U.S. soldier is a befitting image for the cover of Tariq Ali's account of Iraqi resistance to occupation. Ali presents his illustration of Iraqi and Arab history as a warning to the occupier: Iraq has a long history of struggle against empire.

Ali provides evidence of resistance by quoting from the poems, memoirs and letters of Iraqi poets and intellectuals; he recounts personal interviews and describes his own experiences, and draws heavily from the scholarly work of Arab historian Hanna Batatu. In highly readable, if somewhat circuitous prose, Ali gives a brief history of the Mongolian takeover of 1258, the rise and disintegration of the Ottoman empire, and Iraq's colonization by the British. He gives special attention to the communist movement in Iraq, the self-serving U.S. encouragement of the Ba'ath Party and repression of communism, and the subsequent rise of the Ba'athists and Saddam Hussein.

What doesn't receive much treatment is Iraq under Saddam's regime - but that's not the point. Ali's message is clear: as much as the people of Iraq suffered under Saddam, Anglo-American occupation is no better. In chapter six Ali turns his attention to the United States' imperialist agenda, and the development of the disproportionate power of the American Empire. Ali's attack is not party specific; the violence that the U.S. has inflicted and encouraged in the name of capitalism is part of the global strategy of both parties. Ali asserts that the "solitary existence" of America's empire is unique: "It is the first time in world history that a single Empire has become hegemonic."

The people of Iraq will resist occupation; they *are* resisting. But "the movement that is needed can only be effective if it is global; and if it understands that the neo-liberal legs on which the imperial giant walks are not as strong as capitalist witch-doctors like to suggest." Ali's book offers historical evidence to back up what you probably already knew: capitalism is the root of all evil.

—Dawna De Martini

RENT GIRL
written by Michelle Tea
illustrated by Laurenn McCubbin
$24.95

Rent Girl

Michelle Tea
Illustrated by
Laurenn McCubbin
240 pages • $24.95
Last Gasp
777 Florida St.
San Francisco, CA 94110
www.lastgasp.com

"People like to say things like 'all work is prostitution'. Most work is exploitation but most work is not prostitution. Prostitution is prostitution, a very specific sort of exploitation"

Rent Girl, as the title suggests, is a book about whoring for a living. Michelle Tea has written about experiences as a sex worker in her other books (*The Passionate Mistakes and Intricate Corruption of One Girl in America* published by Autonomedia & *Valencia* published by Seal Press) but never with such detail & reckless abandon. In *Rent Girl*, a collection of stories, she is exquisitely elaborate, always insightful, sometimes heartrending & often hilarious. This book is easy to read & hard to put down.

In the first story Michelle is a 21-year-old baby dyke living in the Boston area & has just discovered that her girlfriend of one month, Steph, is a prostitute. An "escort". They go together to a hooker party on the occasion of the Madame's birthday & soon after Michelle launches her own career. In a later story she reflects that "apparently all a person needs to do is meet a prostitute and they will become one. Everyone Steph touched turned to 'ho."

She admits to a pubescent fascination with hookers & a later hatred of men in a story aptly titled *How I Hated Men.* We discover that she was a victim of an early "sexual inappropriateness" that is not elaborated on. She says "I wanted to try things, everything, especially things that are illegal & have a faint whiff of glamour". Money was also a big incentive – she grew up with very little - & during some of her calls, like the 7 hour cocaine call detailed in a later story, *Boundaries,* she fantasizes about killing the guy & making off with his fat roll of bills. She talks about what she will & will not do & the absurd irony that deems certain acts undoable while other equally distasteful acts are considered par for the course.

Her relationship with her girlfriend is tenuous & becomes antagonistic. She was attracted to Steph's meanness in a way that she feels to have the mean girl on her side might make her safer in the long run. Michelle feels a rush of exhilaration when she herself is able to be mean to people, like the john she records singing his lousy folk songs & then she crank calls him singing them back with Steph. But Steph lies about everything & when the relationship finally dissolves we are happy for Michelle although she seems temporarily lost.

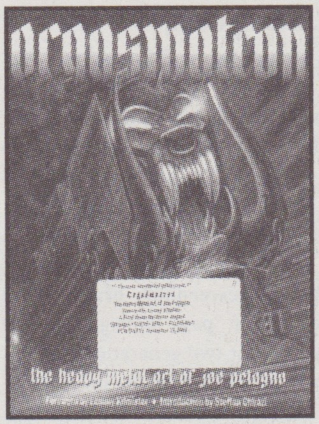
She is attracted to prostitution for the money & the apparent lack of effort needed in this job field but she finds out that the psychic effort is insidiously overwhelming. She tells us whoring is lousy work "it makes you vengeful...turns you into a greedy monster because no matter how much money they are giving you it's never enough". She seems to know that she is worth much more than a dollar value & tells us at one point "I deserve a prize. A gigantic prize I'm never going to get, for being a female in this world". She proclaims that she truly was a "man-hating lesbian" & is horrified when during one call with a New Age trick (the worst kind) she actually has an orgasm. She is truly mystified as to how any one could be attracted to these gross men she is paid to fuck.

Rent Girl encapsulates Michelle's transformation from a young lost-girl working the in-call out-call treadmill in the Boston area to an older & wiser (but still a not quite grounded) girl in San Francisco's Mission district putting on sex shows with her hot young girlfriend & sometimes trying to deal drugs. We follow her & her body, which she often describes in terms of saleability, through bad sex, good sex, crabs, tattoos, low blood sugar, thrifted outfits, dirty apartments, alcohol, drugs, pluto transits, valerian tea & grape popsicles. Tea writes her stories with a cutting sense of humor that hints at the actual gestalt of the experience – Michelle seems to be constantly searching for the love & recognition she knows she deserves but can't quite distinguish as she seemingly calmly observes from the eye of the storm – is it love or just the drugs? Above all else Tea is brutally honest & tells us disturbing details "not to excuse my behavior but to explain it". She is a realist & doesn't inundate us with political diatribes or feminist posturing she just tells us how it is for one girl in America.

The book itself is a beautiful object. About the size of a 7" (but actually 8" sq) it's a comfortable square shape designed & stuffed with gorgeous glossy illustrations by Laurenn McCubbin who has been illustrating & doing her own comic *XXXLIVENUDEGIRLS* for years. Every page is text (great font!) & picture presented in an easy easy to read format. The drawings are quite exquisite – black & white & gray with red highlights – Laurenn has a way to make her figures look photographic while using the sparest of lines & shade. The drawings are so expressive they seem at times almost animated. When Michelle's body betrays her with one john & she feels an orgasm coming on "like a sneeze" we are right there with her seeing the shock & horror in her eyes. We get to visualize the schizophrenic aspects of the in-call seeing Michelle in the role of Bev, the phone girl, Allison, dark haired & slightly sullen & Tiffany, blond & perky. We get to cringe during the story about crabs when the girls have to shave their very sensitive areas. The drawings & text balance each other synergistically creating a sense of immediacy that gives the stories more impact.

With *Rent Girl* Michelle Tea & Laurenn McCubbin have given us more than our money's worth in this dynamic volume. & it's a lot more than any john will ever get. I just hope they make enough money on this project to pay their rent – it's the least they deserve. *Rent Girl* may not preach a heavy political message or teach you how to save the world but it is a heart filled, honest & humorous tale of survival at all costs.

- Fly

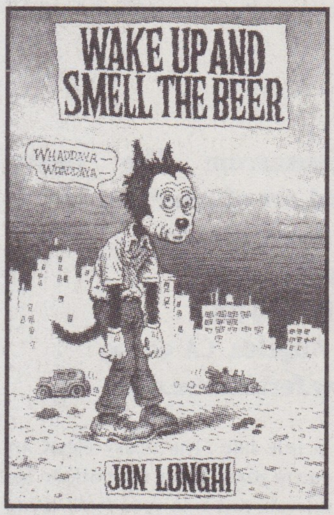


Orgasmatron: The Heavy Metal Art of Joe Petagno

107 pages • $19.95
Feral House
PO Box 39910
Los Angeles, CA 90039
www.feralhouse.com

With a title like "The Heavy Metal Art of..." you're gonna know right off the bat how relevant this is to you. You'll either rush out and grab this nice full-color over-sized tome and use it as the template for your next full sleeve tattoo or you'll laugh yourself to tears at how little the aesthetic preferences of the average metal head has progressed since the sixth grade. Joe Petagno is a Denmark-by-way-of-Portland-Maine-dwelling graphic artist best known for his work with the ever-lasting Motorhead. That this contains a sizable (if not complete) collection of beautifully rendered Motorhead covers should be enough of a sell for the average rabid Motorhead devotee. Plus Lemmy himself provides the foreword here, though if you're buying it solely for that reason, his scant 187 words (I counted) might prove a tad under whelming. Come on Lemmy, some MRR record reviews are longer than that. Petagno got his start painting cover art for the likes of Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and of course Hawkwind in the '60s and '70s. Easily a good fifty percent of the works included here are album covers, and virtually all of these are for 90's death metal bands, some more notable than others, including: Krisiun, Ouija, Angel Corpse, Centinex, Incantation, Vital Remains, Sigh, Diabolic and several others. I presume the years in between Zep and death metal was spent working primarily with Motorhead, since little else is mentioned. It's too bad more isn't mentioned about the artist himself- between Lemmy's brief utterance and the longer but still cursory introduction from long-time metal journalist Steffan Chirazi, not much is revealed about a man who most likely led a rather interesting life. But the point of this is the art not the man, and that at least you get plenty of. In case you need more explanation than "heavy metal album cover art," commonly depicted topics include: demons, horns, lava, lightning, fangs, skulls, skeletons, blood, gore, swords, torture, snakes, wizards, warfare, chains, monsters, pentagrams, scenes in hell, horses, scythes, Satan, graveyards, cloaks, moons, axes, ravens, wolves, demons playing cellos and violins, demons with vaginas on their heads gorging on a victim's ripped out heart- you get the picture. Some of this plows dangerously deep into D & D/*Lord of the Rings* fantasy type territory, but aside from a few vaguely sexual, bio-morphic Geiger-like sketches, most of this is, as one might expect, just sheer demons-torturing-minions-in-hell fare, just like the kids like it. I won't spend too much time critiquing Petagno's actual artistic abilities, one, because I don't know much about traditional virtues such as composition, shading, color contrast and the like, and two, because the extreme niche value of the subject matter renders objective criticism completely besides the point. It's pretty simple-metal heads are gonna love it, everyone else- not so much. In that regard, it's not terribly different than a hypothetical compilation of dis-core album cover collages depicting the horrors of modern society reaped upon little baby seal pups, but anyway, until that sees the light of day, enjoy this colorful diversion.

-Elliott Lange



Wake Up and Smell the Beer
Jon Longhi
192 Pages • $11.95
Manic D Press
P.O. Box 410804
San Francisco, CA 94141

In the acknowledgements to his new novel/memoir, *Wake Up and Smell the Beer*, author Jon Longhi asserts that the book "is little more than a long love letter to [San Francisco]." Now, part of me (you know, that bitter old man part of me that gets exceedingly ornery when parties go on past midnight and is always at least two generations behind when it comes to catching on to newfangled technologies) wants to make some sarcastic comment about how he's right about the "little more" bit, and point out how little fun it would be to read a 192 page mash note. This awfully negative person that somehow lives inside me would also sometimes like to make such sweeping generalizations as "unless you are Hunter S. Thompson, you cannot make the zaniness involved in doing copious amounts of 'mind-expanding' drugs sound the least bit interesting in any kind of literary context" or "if I read one more story about a sad-sack man finding some kind of hackneyed 'greater meaning' in his drug-induced excuse for a life as he drags his ever-expanding beer belly towards a festering middle age, I am going to set fire to every tree and recycling plant in the country so that such books can no longer be published under any circumstances, unless we want to somehow revive the tried-and-true method of carving glyphs into stone, but then maybe there will only be four copies in existence, and I can go my entire life without reading a single one."

Fortunately, I've grown quite adept at keeping that tiny little person away from the keyboard, excluding the last paragraph, which I'm dreadfully sorry you had to read. You see, even after hours of mental "flip-flopping," Longhi's book remains almost fundamentally frustrating, and whatever ravings I subject you to are a part of that frustration. Exceedingly well-written, incisive and funny at certain points and rife with clunky prose and awkward over-explanation at others, Longhi consistently comes close to lulling we readers into appreciating his coming-of-middle-age story, which follows the haps and misadventures of a group of eccentrics as they careen through the San Francisco Bay Area, before blindsiding us with trite sentiment and empty counter-culturalisms. He creates enticing, layered characters and then forces overwrought dialogue out of their mouths; he paints one of the most striking and vivid portraits of San Francisco I have ever had the pleasure of reading, and then lets our fair city get bogged down in the overall meaninglessness of his anecdotal narrative.

Again, I resist negativity because I legitimately believe that Longhi possesses undeniable talent. His unique observational eye and gift for elaborate characterization left me happily zooming through the pages at various intervals, and the reader can truly feel the verve with which Longhi writes. However, the narrative hits atrocious walls when the author attempts to inject some sort of profundity into the goings-on. From the narrator's marriage to a series of "jam sessions" in the "righteous music studio" below the characters' apartment building, Longhi goes to great lengths to convince us of the sobering sentimentality of his long strange trip, but is left grasping at straws, resigning himself to trite, obvious distillations of a meaning we are supposed to see, but which never quite comes into focus.

Though I've brought Longhi's over-reliance on clichéd sentiment under particularly harsh scrutiny, it seems as if what is lacking from his book comes from one very specific place. As I've already said, Longhi renders his secondary characters masterfully; I followed their exploits with some anticipation, and could probably recount said adventures if needed. However, I cannot for the life of me conjure any significant details about the narrator himself, except for the fact that he is married and works for a book distributor. Longhi spends so much time bringing his outer circle to brilliant life that he completely avoids filling in the novel's central void. The result is a narrator of *Gatsby*-like mystery, though I found this Nick Carraway difficult to care about, and ultimately less than compelling. Lacking any narrative authority, the protagonist remains in no position to convince us of the importance of his words when he cannot even convince us of his own importance.

Wake Up and Smell the Beer is enjoyable, no doubt about that; sometimes even enthrallingly so. It reads like the ramblings of that one friend we all have who seems stuffed to the gills with stories: it races at times, exalts at others, and during its telling, you remain engaged and entranced by the utter absurdity life seems to dole out from time to time. But then, as the conversation comes to a close and you reinsert yourself into the relative banality of your everyday comings and goings, you walk away missing something, some foundation, some truth that you thought existed, which evaporates as soon as the story ends.

—Max Tremblay

MOVIES

FINAL CUT

BY STEVEN SPINALI

HOLIDAY IN PATAGONIA

The perennial market for day-glow Che Guevara posters suggests that the Cuban revolutionary may have passed from history to the status of pop-culture legend. While Castro has (especially of late) been guilty of political heavy-handedness, Guevara's career as Castro's lieutenant was cut short by political assassination. For many, he enjoys almost a martyr status. **The Motorcycle Diaries** is director Walter Sallee's ambitious attempt to capture that period in the early 50s when the idealistic med student's life forked into a new path.

Only twenty-three, Guevara (Gael Garcia Bernel) was known early on to his friends as Fuser. Specializing in the treatment of leprosy, he set out on an epic quest down the spine of his native Argentina to Peru. Ostensibly, the goal was to train under a respected specialist; in reality, he and his lusty friend Alberto Granado (Rodrigo de la Serna) hoped to take a deep drought of America in a kind of grand road trip most only dream about. Their chariot was "The Mighty One"—a less-than-mighty, late-30s motorcycle that will soon see its last days. It's a journey that would take them countless miles through the brightest and saddest parts of Latin America.

The Mighty One sputters and coughs down long, pebbly roads, barely missing stray cows and sundry wildlife. On their first real rest stop, they camp out at the manicured estate of Fuser's girlfriend, whose virginity is protected by a tag-team of prune-faced elders. From this pocket of privilege (a spread of sparkling white houses on landscaped gardens), Fuser and Alberto find comfort with an America that would, alas, become increasingly remote.

Eventually, they pick up their stakes and motor along paths lined first by rocks, then snow. They encounter a stream of unfortunates—mainly migrant farmers and miners—who have been expelled from wealthy estates by unscrupulous landowners. Fuser in particular can't seem to shake the images of these poor from his mind; and when The Mighty One finally dies, the two find even themselves drifting ever closer to poverty.

Despite the film's (and especially Fuser's) earnestness, it falls into that standby of modern movie genres—the road movie. But it's never escapist fare, and that helps keep it honest. In fact, **The Motorcycle Diaries** begins to take hold on the viewer only when their motorcycle has been relegated to the scrap heap, and the duo is forced to hitchhike, or tackle the mountainous roads on foot. In one miraculous and desperate moment, Alberto points his pistol into the sky and actually hits a duck. Soon, they'd be forced to join the ranks of miners to get enough money to continue their journey.

After a withering trek, the pair finally arrives at their destination. At the leper colony, Alberto helps out as a tissue biologist, while Fuser trains as a physician. The leper colony turns out to be the perfect metaphor for their pair's experiences on the road. It's divided into two parts by a long river that's maybe a mile wide, separating doctors from lepers; it's as if economic realities had been transferpainted onto a map. The nuns subscribe to the notion that all doctors must wear plastic gloves before treating the lepers (even though leprosy isn't contagious). Isolated, dependent, and disease-ridden, the lepers have only Christian charity to keep them alive (that is, if they go to mass; otherwise they don't get to eat).

Fuser suffers from heaving bouts of asthma, and identifies with the patients in the leper colony. He's come to take his Hippocratic Oath to a new level: that all unfortunates, healthy or sick, must receive help if they need it. His last day there, the staff treats him to a party with the doctors and staff; instead, he chooses to swim across the wide, dark river to spend time with the lepers he's befriended. It's a swim that leaves him weak and heaving, Fuser's ability to bridge gaps between people is the perfect metaphor at the right time.

The Motorcycle Diaries is based on two posthumous journals that were discovered and published in the 70s, bringing a human dimension to those ubiquitous Che Guevara posters. Director Selles takes his job every bit as seriously as Guevara, and makes this road trip into something that's credible and sometimes even moving. (Be sure to stay into the credits, where you'll get to see photos of Fuser and Alberto on the actual trip—as well a look at Alberto today.)

In its own way, **Bright Leaves** also deals with the unearthing of a legend. Acclaimed film diarist Ross McElwee tells the story of his great-grandfather, John Harvey McElwee. The gray, bewhiskered fellow died in bankruptcy, claiming to his last day that his world-famous Bull Durham tobacco recipe that had been stolen from him. The old tobacco-man blamed the Duke family for his misfortunes—the same Dukes that would soon be famous for Duke University and other philanthropic projects. In the burgeoning days of tobacco farming, the elder Duke's purportedly torched the warehouses of his competitors, leaving him with a monopoly. Entire fortunes went up in smoke.

As a man, Ross McElwee realizes that there's no point raking through these old coals. But as a filmmaker with roots in the South, he can't help but wonder what might have been. He visits his cousin, who owns an insanely large collection of vintage celluloid (and an in-house screening room to watch his treasures). They screen a black and white Gary Cooper/Lauren Bacall period piece—**Bright Leaves**—a melodrama that tells a story eerily like that of Ross's great-grandfather.

McElwee's re-take on **Bright Leaves** leads you through the history and world of tobacco, much of it personal. His film crew is mostly himself behind the camera and someone manning the boom mike. In one typical sequence, he rides with a former schoolteacher to the old McElwee mansion. As luck would have it, it was flattened for a parking lot.

Strictly speaking, **Bright Leaves** is not an anti-smoking film, but it doesn't shrink from stating tobacco's deadly toll. Ross makes friends with a young couple, soon to be married, who vow to stop smoking the day of the ceremony; but each time McElwee visits them, the sheepish newlyweds have pushed their deadline to quit a few weeks, then months forward. Everyone knows (though no one admits) that they're hopelessly addicted.

Ironically, the McElwee family found its wealth, not in tobacco, but as doctors, treating the victims of the Bull Durham legacy.

McElwee confesses being equivocal about tobacco. On one hand, he wouldn't mind having the kind of wealth that comes from a family association with Big Tobacco; then again, how do you resolve your conscience to the fact that your product kills people? It's a conundrum he faces with all the people he meets in the tobacco industry. Some find a way to rationalize it, but many are so addicted they don't even try.

Always dryly commenting in the background, Ross McElwee supplies a memorable set of real-life characters to spice up his narrative. We meet tobacco growers, brokers, and auctioneers; people who smoke, and those who make their living treating them; patients on the brink of death (and others who think the day will never come for them); a screenwriter's opinionated widow, and a film critic who gets an interview on wheels "for kinetic effect"; and the chroniclers, like Ross and his cousin, who suffer their own withering addiction—to film.

McElwee's films are seeded with his own family history, his work less argumentative than contemplative. (The curious are urged to start off with this widely acclaimed debut, **Sherman's March**, a funny and mildly compulsive study of the southern personality). In fact, he's notorious in his own home for filming everything—even his own wedding. He also offers some pointed insights into relationship between history imagined and observed. For McElwee, life is so precious that it demands documenting every possible minute; instead of being a doctor, he's chosen instead to save what he can of the past. McElwee's special relationship with history is what makes **Bright Leaves** so more memorable than the melodrama that proved to be its inspiration.

Comments? Email me at anywhichway@myway.com.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

COMBATING BANALITY AND MEDIOCRITY

My mother did not vote for Bush, so I am remaining part of the Keddy family. Good news, I suppose. Watching Bill Hicks the day after the election made things slightly easier to take. "When did mediocrity and banality become a good image for your children?" Bill asks during an in-depth look at the relationship between rock music, drugs and New Kids On The Block. Yeah, what the fuck happened?

Bill Hicks Live: Satirist, Social Critic, Stand Up Comedian DVD is so great. After years of watching Hicks' performances on eighth generation videotapes, it is refreshing to finally have a good copy. Included are three live performances from Chicago, Montreal and London. In all three, Hicks arrives with attitude and lets loose on everything you may or may not want to hear. He talks about the good side of drugs, rock and roll, politics, war, and sex. All done is an honest and insightful way which points out the hypocrisies we encounter in our daily lives. The only comedian that even comes close these days is Lewis Black.

My favorite Hicks-ism is when he simply uses the microphone to make a bunch of noise. He bangs the microphone against his forehead to emphasis the point he is trying to make. He sticks the microphone into his mouth making a loud, menacing, satanic noise. The latter trick he uses as a visual and aural punchline on jokes he makes about rock stars whom shill corporate products. His feeling is that any musician who would sell a product is sucking Satan's cock. He demonstrates it over and over again.

One of Hicks' bits that rings of déjà vu so close these days is about Bush, Sr., and his Iraqi war. Hicks states the obvious—he feels a war is only a war if two armies fight it. I guess Iraq didn't have any weapons of mass destruction back then either. He pictures Bush, Sr. and friends flipping through their war product catalog and picking out items to test. As he mockingly follows a bomb as it lands and explodes, he replies in pseudo-Texan accent, "Cool."

The **Bill Hicks Live: Satirist, Social Critic, Stand Up Comedian** DVD also includes a bonus documentary **Just A Ride**. It is a look back at his life from his family and fellow comedians. I would have loved to see some footage of Hicks performing at the Comedy Workshop when he was fifteen or the infamous censored performance for the Late Night With David Letterman. That incident in itself is very strange. Letterman is now known as both the person who gave Hicks his break into television and the one who censored his last television appearance. Yikes. (www.rykodisc.com)

And then there is Jandek. Good to know there are at least some interesting people who come from Texas. **Jandek On Corwood** is not much of a look at Jandek's life. His aversion to publicity has taken care of any misconceptions about attempting that. It is a look at his music and the impression it has made on the people who have heard it. There are interviews with record collectors, college DJs, and music critics who recall their introductions to Jandek, as well as reveal their assumptions about who the man is.

Jandek is a musician from Houston, TX who has released thirty-five albums since 1978. All done on his own label and distributed by him under the Corwood Industries moniker. Jandek says, "I figure I can't go less than two (albums) a year. If I do I'll really go into obscurity." His music is minimal with stream of consciousness-type lyrics that make some people feel it is out of tune or simplistic. Music critic Gary Pig Gold refutes this assumption in **Jandek On Corwood**, "Eric Clapton wouldn't know how to do it." To me, his music either appeals to you or it doesn't. I'd like to think Jandek prefers it that way.

Jandek On Corwood allows many long sequences of music between interviews so any viewer who may have not heard of Jandek prior gets a good feel for what everyone is talking about. For me, since I have not listened to Jandek it years, it reminded me of how much I liked his records. Unlike most of the people in the film I never pictured Jandek as a recluse or someone with mental illness. I always appreciated his way of making music and I assumed that he just did everything the way he wanted. That's what I would do. It is a very impressive independent stance to uphold for so many years. I am sure there have been people who have offered to put out records for him, yet he continues to do it himself.

There are some great bonus features on the DVD. The best of these is the complete interview John Trubee conducted with Jandek in 1985. A segment of the interview concludes the documentary. It is the only interview that has ever been done with Jandek. You get to hear his voice explain things and not explain things. It is fascinating. Also included is a featurette on album covers, some selections of his music, interviews about Jandek, and articles about him. Since **Jandek On Corwood** was made, a new wrench has been thrown in the Jandek mystery. He performed live at a festival in Scotland in October 2004. I wish I had been there. (www.jandekoncorwood.com)

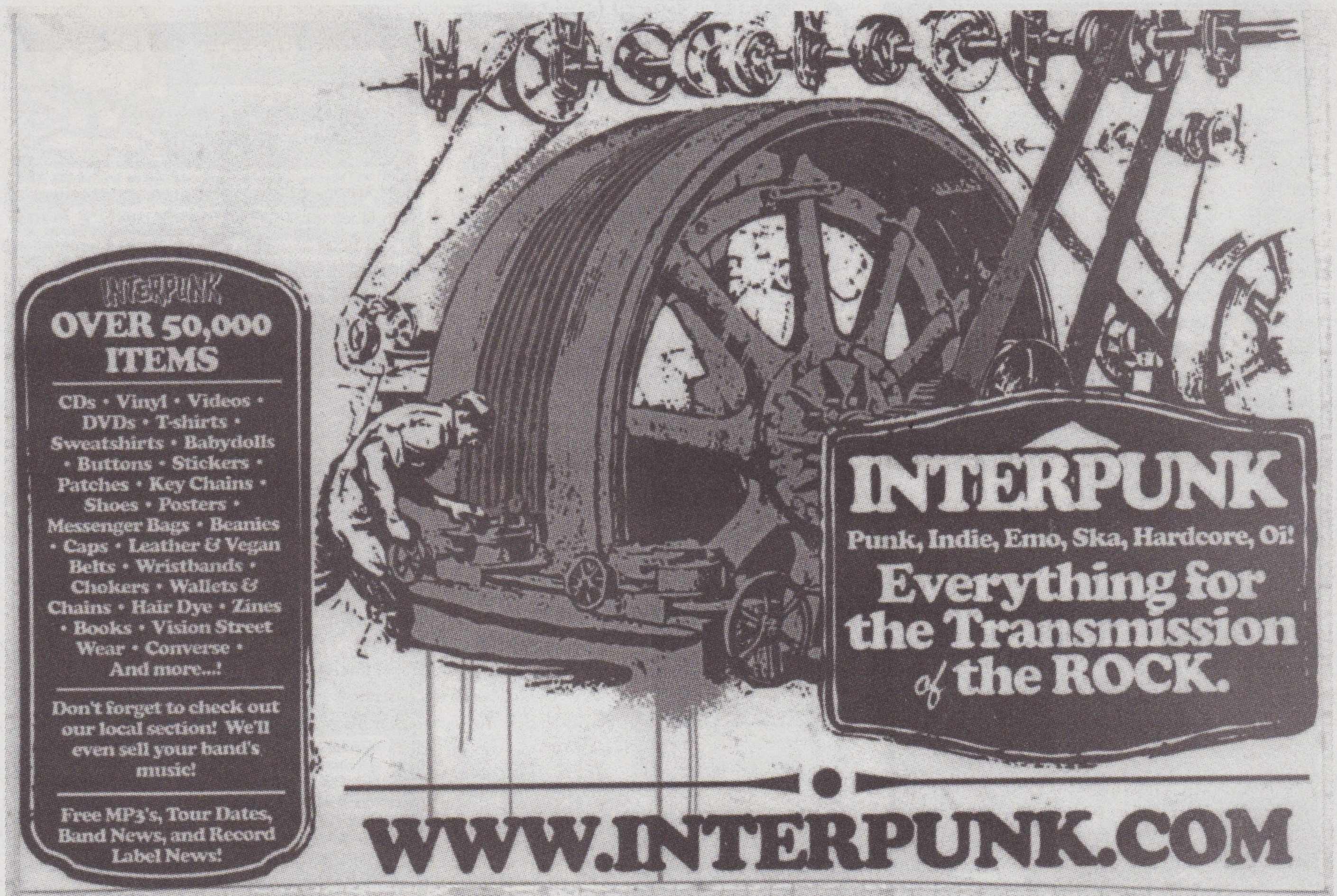
A Hundred Dollars and A T-shirt is a documentary about zine makers and zine culture focused around Portland, OR., which, although I didn't realize it, is apparently the zine capital of the US. The documentary is set up like a zine. There are chapters such as "What Is A Zine?" comprised of clips of different people involved in zine making telling you what they think. Everyone's opinion is different. Some contradict. Some reiterate. But from them, you can piece together a good assessment of what a zine is.

A Hundred Dollars and A T-shirt offers an overview of the culture. It may inspire someone by opening him or her up to the zine world. But it definitely does not make that world too glamorous. It could be that my personal experience with zines (working at *MRR* for 13 years and counting) clouds any sense of awe I might have otherwise had, but it is great to know that there are people out there doing it, selling it, and passing it on.
(www.microcosmpublishing.com)

Table Scraps: Video Cuizine #1 seems like the week in the life of any punk rocker you might know. Like, here is what I did this week in convenient DVD form. There is some fun animation mixed with glimpses of live shows, chats with band members, a night at the bar, and ten questions with a drunk in a parking garage. The last is my favorite part. The interviewer asks average guy Peter Lind the same questions he asks a member of the Dropkick Murphys, and the answers are edited together. Lind is drunk and looking for his car; his answers are entertaining in a defiant punk rock way. Of course, no one tries to stop him from driving. The Dropkick Murphys guy has obviously been interviewed before.

Also included on **Table Scraps: Video Cuizine #1** are performances from All Girl Summer Fun Band, The Strike, The Soviettes, The Crush and The Vibrators. There is a segment on a local punk rock karaoke night. A singer gets up to perform and announces, "Are you ready for some Screeching Weasel?" Someone in the crowd shouts a forceful, "No!" That would have been me. (Table Scraps, PO Box 300033, Minneapolis, MN 55403, $7 ppd., checks payable to Dave Underhill)

I am always looking for film to review. If you made one, send a copy to me c/o *MRR*, PO Box 406760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760. E-mail me at carolynmrr@juno.com if you have a film screening in San Francisco. I will go see it.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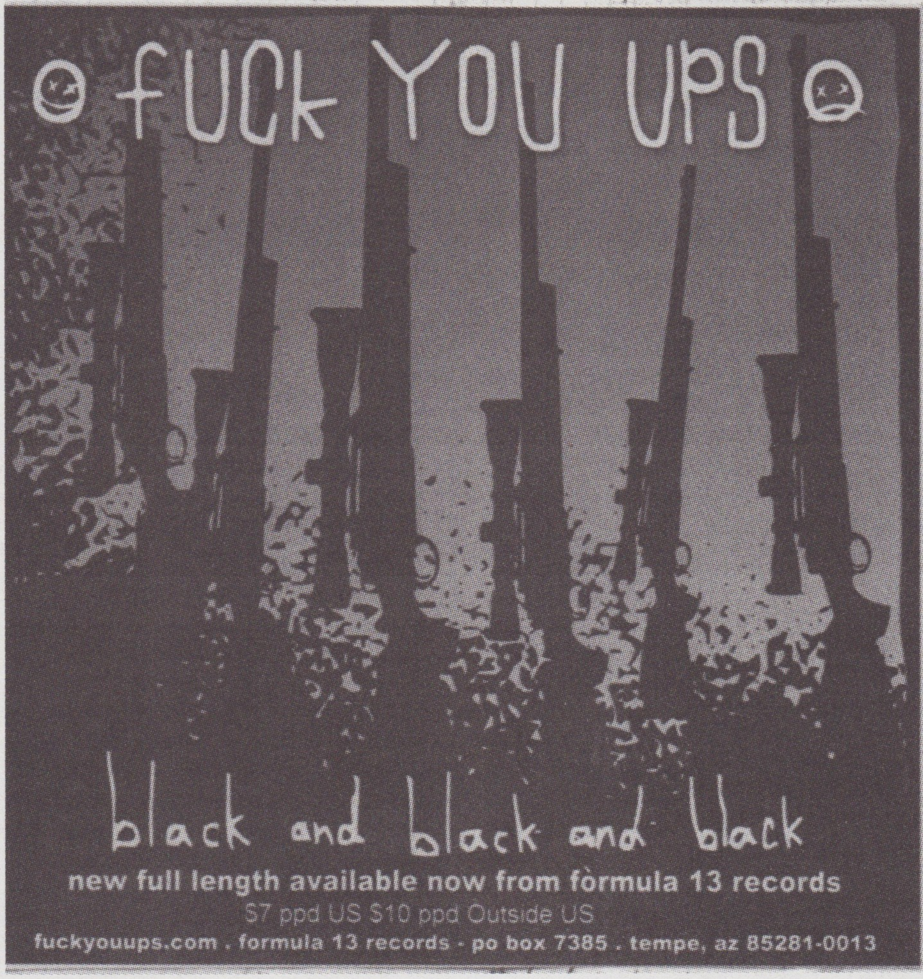
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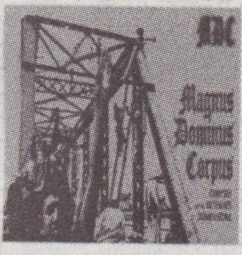

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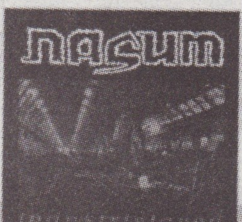

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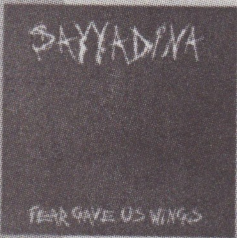

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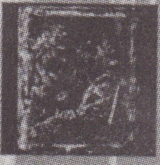

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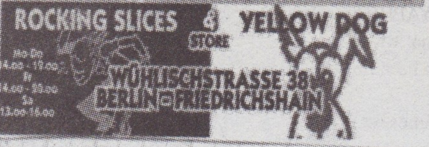

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AÇAO DIRETA / CONTRASTO – split EP

Long-time rockers AÇO DIRETA from Brazil play some straightforward midtempo hardcore here. The tunes are dark and heavy with a smidgen of metal thrown in and seem a little *harder* than I remember them being. CONTRASTO, from Italy, kick the pace up quite a few notches with a fast thrash attack coupled with abrasive yet muffled-sounding vocals. A solid release from two solid bands. (RC)

(Peculio, Caixa Postal #393, Santos—SP, 11001– 970, BRASIL, www.peculiodiscos.com.br)

ACEFACE – "Opening Up / Broken Homes"

I guess the whole idea behind these balding refugees from the great, underrated '79 mod revival period is to play honest-to-god, straight-up British music. This I can relate to, as my mod hang-ups—unlike my hair—are still refusing to go. Now let me just say girls and guys, you've got to have balls the size of space hoppers to do a cover of the mighty CIRCLES' "Opening Up," and from one kindred spirit to another I was right behinds ya's hoping for an ear blazer, a stunner of sorts, but you went and totally murdered it. Too much crunch and too much metal, and not enough of that sweet nifty power pop that's honey to my ears. I know you got potential, now let me see it. (SD)

(Camden Town, PO Box 121, 17080 Girona, SPAIN, camden-town@iespana.es)

AD CALENDAS GRAECAS – "Ztracis" 12"

I was eager to listen to this record, because thanks to the *Dying Alive* comp, I know that the Czech Republic has a number of really excellent raw punk and hardcore bands. AD CALENDA GRAECAS plays fast (but not too fast) hardcore with a moderately crusty bent. Unfortunately, while this record has its moments, it doesn't really hold my interest all the way through. I think the problem is in the unexpected time changes and occasionally goofy guitar leads—the songs are just more complicated than they need to be. The record comes packaged in a gatefold sleeve, and each song has its own cut-and-paste artwork, which is a really nice touch. Lyrics in Czech with English translations. (GN)

(Ultimo Ratio, Kokavec Miroslav, Spacilova 11, Brno—Cernovice, 618 00, CZECH REPUBLIC)

ADRIFT – "Austero" EP

ADRIFT, from Spain, plays epic-sounding emo hardcore. Metal guitars that get abstract and feedback-y with growled vocals way up front. Their songs bring to mind bands like YAPHET KOTTO (who I like), and countless other crusty, emotional whatever-the-fuck-they're-going-for bands that I don't listen to because I don't ride a bike. (WR)

(La Idea, PO Box 18251, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN, www.sindios.net)

A-FRAMES – "Complications / Frankenstein"

More of what you would expect from the A-FRAMES. Pummeling drums and bass, angular and repetitive freak out guitar, and shitloads of alienation. Sounds like it was recorded in 1983. This sounds to my ears like the two pre-LP 45s. The full-lengths sort of left me cold (which may be exactly what they were going for), too many years of listening to the FALL non-stop has burnt me out on anything like that. I do like this single quite a bit though. "Frankenstein" could be the follow up to "Plastica" from an earlier 45; it's similar lyrically and in feeling. This track is the best thing I have heard from these guys yet. The guitar solo freak-out reverb breakdown thingy near the end of the song is the most astonishing thing I have heard in a while. Fuckin' A—it's worth the price of admission alone. "Complications" didn't knock my socks off, but A-FRAMES fans will not be disappointed. Put $4 in an envelope and send it off now. (RR)

(S-S, 1114 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814)

ALLEGED GUNMEN – "Return to Zero" LP

There's a gun theme running throughout this record, from the artwork to the lyrics (and of course the name of the band). What we have here is something rare and very pleasant to the ear. The ALLEGED GUNMEN play reverb-drenched, surf-tinged, melodic punk that is very LA sounding and reminds me of no one more than the GUN CLUB. If you're a fan of that band but want to hear something current, skip the recent reissues and go straight for this. It's a treat. (AM)

(Kapow, www.kapowrecords.com)

ALL OR NOTHING – "Start at Zero" CD

So, is Hellcat still putting out records? I guess this may be offensive...to my grandmother. Warped tour, here we come. What the fuck, you are German...why can't you sound more like KRAFTWERK? They have a song called "Best Friends"—what is this Care Bear bullshit? (NT)

(www.anfrecords.com)

AMERICAN TOURISTS – "Kinder Des Zorns" CD

Pretty goofy stuff from these three German youngsters. This starts out sounding like melodic pop-punk but soon devolves into noisy thrash, without ever really hitting on anything interesting or memorable. There are moments that aren't bad but with the combination of squeaky-clean production values, "funky" breakdowns, and saccharine pop moments, this is leaving me pretty cold. (AM)

(Zeitstrafe, Postfach 28 22, 24518 Neumünster, GERMANY)

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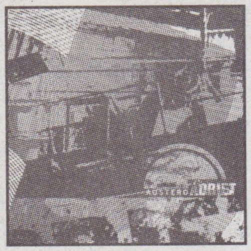
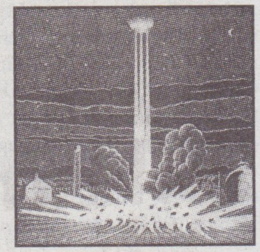




AMERICAN
TOURISTS
KINDERDESZORNS

AMOEBA / 7 MAGS – split LP

Two hardcore bands from Argentina here. AMOEBA play skate thrash with the occasional dose of surf. They remind me a lot of JFA. Something about how the vocals are recorded is really cool (or maybe it's the accents)—kind of eerie. Listening to AMOEBA makes me feel like it's 1985 and someone sent me this on a mixtape of foreign bands. Great stuff. 7 MAGS on the other hand are a little more rough 'n' ready and generic, although they do throw in a weird techno instrumental. All in all a decent split—it's interesting to hear what's going on down in Argentina. (AM)

(Amoeba Fun Box c/o Mariano Alonso, CC 3288 CP 100,Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA, amoebaskaterock@hotmail.com)

ANAL MUCUS / MORMONS ON BICYCLES – split EP

Good ol' fashioned punk. I don't mean 1977 punk, I mean bad attitude, lo-fi, DIY, drunk, sloppy, amateurish punk. Loads of spirit, little ability—you gotta love it. Both bands remind of HUMPY, HICKEY, FISHSTICKS, LOS HUEVOS (not musically, mind you, but in spirit) and a lot of early-to-mid 90s greats that no one cares about anymore. Both bands have dumb, brilliant and fun songs about shitting your pants, short bus kids, masturbation, and getting old. There is a drawing of MORMONS ON BICYCLES bicycling through the pit that is precious. MORMONS ON BICYCLES pokes fun at the "Vegetarian, Librarian, Pedestrian," "…reading books at the library, so darn fun, but have you ever checked out a book on masturbation? Never do jaywalk, abide by rules, some say a fool, some say your cool, your walking, you're reading with healthy stool." I'm sure both these bands are great fun live, though they probably never get through a whole set. Makes me want to drink a 40 oz. in the Fairmont on the way down to Little Compton. Green vinyl, limited to 600 copies. Send $4 to Skateboardnaked (love that label name). (RR)

(Skateboardnaked, c/o Dennis, 665 Winding Creek Terrace, Brentwood, CA 94513)

ANGSTZUSTAND – "Malen Nach Zahlen" LP

Alright—yet another in the seemingly endless parade of excellent dark, moody, depressive hardcore releases from the great state of Germany. This band is a bit more melancholy than most, and are a bit more mid-paced and melodic and less metal, except for the nice occasional touch of double kick drumming, like maybe a more URANUS-influenced version of countrymen FORCED TO DECAY. The lyrics, all sung in German, focus on the darker side of the usual political, social and emotional hardcore agendas. Good stuff. (EL)

(Narshardaa, c/o Springer, Wollbergsredder 9, 24113 Molfsee, GERMANY, www.narshardaa.com)

ANTI-CIMEX – "Gainkiller" LP

Perhaps the greatest of the 80s Swedish hardcore bands, ANTI-CIMEX first distinguished themselves with their brilliant *Anarkist Attack* EP, which is presented here. This LP also contains a selection of mostly outstanding demo tracks, as well as material from the mega-rare *Criminal Attack* 12". For the two or three of you who aren't yet fans, this is riffy hardcore that, at its best, has that unpredictable, raw, almost trashy sound that made them so distinctive. This is mandatory, if only for the sheer breadth of rare material. (SS)

(Underground)

ANTISEEN – "Dear Abby" EP

I don't care what you say, ANTISEEN is fucking great. Low-down dirty punk about wrasslin' from these chicken fried folx. On this 7" we have the single from their new album, as well as three well-recorded live tracks. Three of the four have been released elsewhere. Not the best record to start your collection of the ANTISEEN back catalog with, but still 200 times better then AGAINST ME. (NT)

(www.tkorecords.com)

ARSEN - "Aka Konig Der Monster" LP

A bone-crushing assault of dark modern hardcore from Germany. These seven songs are filled with murk and gloom, but don't lack the intensity of punk rock. Ferocious screams deliver intelligent personal-political lyrics over piercing guitars and pounding drums. Pure devastation. No gods... Only monsters. (VH)

(Narshardaa, www.narshardaa.com)

ATARI – "Ten Years Later: Discography" CD

There are three rules to follow when putting out your band's discography. Rule #1: You need enough material to warrant a discography. Rule #2: You need to be good. Rule #3: You need extensive liner notes and photographs documenting all the stages of your band's existence. This last rule is such a simple concept, and yet *so* many labels fuck it up. There is seriously nothing worse than a good band getting a half-assed, lazy layout with missing lyrics and no mention of where the tracks originally came from. Luckily, ATARI nails all three of these rules right on the head. ATARI were never my *favorite* band from the '97 era, but I liked their first 7", and I fucking *loved* "Times Together" from the *Growing Stronger* comp. After listening to this CD in its entirety a few times, I can honestly say that the demo, comp tracks, and their second 7" are as good as the stuff I just mentioned. Even the live show at the end is a great listen. Kudos to Broken Man Records for leaving a great legacy for a very much underrated and underappreciated straight-edge band from the '97 youth crew revival. Now all we need is a RANCOR discography. Sean Youngblood, I am looking in your direction…(CC)

(Broken Man, PO Box 63586, Philadelphia, PA, 19147)

AUDIO KOLLAPS - "Music from an Extreme, Sick World" CD

Ex-members of RECHARGE make good on their *Apocalypse Now* imagery with their second full-length album of pissed-off, pessimistic, hard-charging DISCHARGE-gone-death-metal style fury, this time taking aim on the current war and the US in particular. The 26-second "Fuck the USA" pretty well sums up their position. Plenty of double-kick churn calls to mind BOLT THROWER on the mid-pace parts and plenty of blast beats on the fast parts suggest "Harmony"-era NAPALM DEATH, all mixed between the standard D-beat verses. Also includes the tracks from their WOLFBRIGADE split and a RATTUS cover. (EL)

(Crimes Against Humanity, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702, www.cahrecords.com)

AUTOMATICS – "Forty Virgins in the Afterlife" CD

I think this is an old Brit band. I could be wrong. They could be aging LA rockers with bad Brit accents. STEVE JONES (presumably *the* Steve Jones) guests on guitar. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to add much. They play plodding pub/pop rock. Similar to EDDIE & THE HOT RODS, or second LP-era SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS (when they shortened their name to just SLAUGHTER) minus the catchy tunes that both of the aforementioned occasionally provided. Oh well. (RK)

(Trash 2001, www.trash2001.de)

BALZAC – "Came Out of the Grave" LP

You know on another website I do a question-and-answer column. One of the questions that pops up now and again is whether I prefer Glenn Danzig or Michael Graves-era MISFITS. Now, I trust most of *MRR* readers realize that this might be the most ridiculous question ever, but I still have to answer it for the misguided youth. So what I tell them is the obvious and then inform them that since the so-called MISFITS reformed, BALZAC has basically been doing the MISFITS thing one better. This one essentially holds to form, along with an intro that could have been ripped off from a MINISTRY record. Good stuff, especially for all you Fiend Club members. (JF)

(G-Force, Wohlerhof 4-30900 Wedemark, GERMANY)

BATTLE ROYALE – "Nichts Geht Mehr" CD

Scathing German metalcore here, not too far removed from such Belgian contemporaries as LIAR, in that they're pretty serious about the metal portion of that compound genre. The guitar work is particularly lethal, and the dual-vocal attack is good and not too over-bearing. My one point of contention is the über-slick production sound—the drums in particular sound devoid of any natural tone and the guitars are way too clean. Roughen things up a bit and you'd have a seriously crushing record here. (EL)

(Mondo Man, www.mondomanrecords.com)

BEERZONE – "Against the Flow" CD

Fun streetpunk (or street fun–punk) from England. The music's pretty straightforward, reminiscent of PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES and maybe OXYMORON. The lyrics deal with Tony Blair ("Stupid Litle Man"), being in a band ("Against the Flow"), flight attendants ("Trolley Dolly"), and of course, drinking ("Bryza" and "Can't You See"), among other things. Not bad. (AD)

(Beer City, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226)

BIG BOYS – "Lullabies to Help the Brain Grow/No Matter How Long the Line is at the Cafeteria, There's Always a Seat" 2xLP

The BIG BOYS were amazing. Really, truly amazing—no matter if they are playing their straight forward hardcore ragers (songs like "Brickwall," "Assault," or "No"), their moody mid-tempo songs (like "Manipulation," or "Sound on Sound"), their funkier cuts ("Funk Off" or "Work") or even their more pop stuff (like the very HÜSKER DÜ-esque "Which Way to Go") the BIG BOYS epitomized the punk *attitude*. The essence of the just go for broke, do-it-yourself because its fun, and who gives a shit if anyone else likes it mindset that makes punk worth-

while. Punk rock music for the freaks and weirdoes—with a big middle finger to all the normals. This double LP is an official re-release of their 1983 and 1984 LPs (*Lullabies to Help the Brain Grow* and *No Matter How Long the Line*…respectively) with complete liner notes, lyrics, album artwork and photographs. Words can't even describe how excited I am to see this back out and available. Just get it, and then *start your own band!* (MT)
(X-Mist, PO Box 1545, 72195 Nagold, GERMANY, www.x-mist.de)

BIG BUSINESS – CD
Four songs of noisy rock with lots of classic rock reference points. Lots of pummeling and cycling riffs here. Heavy, heavy sounds *a la* the MELVINS. Sounds a hell of a lot like KARP and a bit like the TIGHT BROS FROM WAY BACK WHEN. BIG BUSINESS features one Jarred Warren who was (is?) in both of those Northwest outfits. With enough spins this will work it's way into your head and never leave. The CD I received has nice understated stamped art on a slip disc case (I think that's what these things are called), but no other info other than the Wantage USA Records logo. A nice little reminder from a show you can't remember because of one too many bong hits. (RR)
(Wantage USA)

BIRDFLESH - "Alive Autopsy / Trip to the Grave" CD
Yep... It's fast. Oh yeah... *eeeeeeevil*! BIRDFLESH, a third rate ANAL CUNT, play the kind of torturous novelty grind-core that you'd expect to hear from the rock band on *Buffy the Vampire Slayer.* Every second of this CD is completely awful, and not even remotely funny. It's that bad. Jerking off a pit-bull would be more fun than listening to this again... (VH)
(Razorback, PO Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738)

BLOOD I BLEED / UNDER PRESSURE – split EP
BLOOD I BLEED is full-throttle, thrashing power-violence from Holland; they are basically dead ringers for HELLNATION. A lot of intensity and a very old school feel to this. They're good, but UNDER PRESSURE are my easy favorites with their catchy, irregular BLACK FLAG worship. Lots of cool drum fills and catchy 80s hardcore riffs mix with good lyrics about the education system and just solid song writing. Looking forward to hearing more from this promising Canadian band. (EL)
(Podruido, 11040 Cantlay St No. 1, Sun Valley, CA 91352-5068, podruido@yahoo.com)

BLOOD RUNS RED – "Suicide" EP
Dark, angry hardcore from deep within the bowels of Portland. Fast and crusty with gargled echoing vocals. This is raw and basic hardcore punk which will certainly appeal to fans of other Portland bands like RELIGIOUS WAR and BLOOD SPIT NIGHTS. Limited to 500 copies. (RC)
(Whispers In Darkness, PO BOX 40113 Portland, OR 97240-0113)

BLOODSTAINS – "A Darker Side of Black" CD
BLOODSTAINS plays fairly standard tough–guy "street-punk" fare. The singer sounds disturbingly like the sad oaf that barks for OI POLLOI, which is a little disconcerting. Musically, they're not so bad. At their best, they have a little of the kick and melody of SLAUGHTER & THE DOGS, though they don't often attain such lofty heights. Lyrically, they leave er, a lot to be desired, but hey, they're tough as nails, and don't give a fuck, so there you go. (RK)
(Ammonia, www.ammoniarecords.com)

BLOODSTAINS – "Heroin" EP
Thick Boston mid-tempo hardcore punk that borrows heavily from the NEGATIVE APPROACH-meets-POISON IDEA model that bands like CAUSTIC CHRIST and DEAD STOP have mined so well. Must say that BLOODSTAINS does a pretty good job of it as well—as they rip out track after track combining a primal, raw "fuck the world" hardcore feel with a driving, hook-laden *Feel the Darkness*-era POISON IDEA punk approach. Nice to see an anti-heroin song on here as well, given that drugs seeming recent coming back into vogue. Recommended. (MT)
(FNS, PO Box 1299, Boston, MA 02130, www.fnsboston.net)

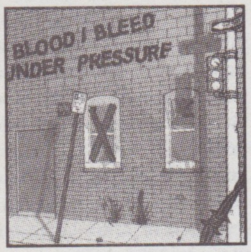
BLOWN TO BITS – "Benefit Record" LP
So, their once was this band called BLOWN TO BITS, who went on a tour in the summer of 2004. Unfortunately, they were dirty punk rockers that god hated very much, and because of that, god smote them by destroying their van, equipment and attempting to take their lives with a hurricane named Ivan. A very sad story for sure. This record is their split LP with DEATHTOLL with the DEATHTOLL side spray-painted out and packaged with a silk-screened cloth cover. It was sold for $5 at shows to benefit these poor punks. Limited to 123 copies. It is probably all sold out, but you should pick up the regular version with the playable DEATHTOLL tracks. Oh ya! The music! BLOWN TO BITS plays mid-tempo, crusty punk rock, and their stuff on here blows their previous releases out of the water. (NT)
(Despotic)

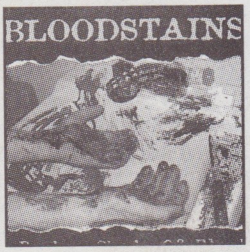
BOTTLES AND SKULLS / LOPEZ – EP
First up are long-time locals BOTTLES AND SKULLS, a band I'm guilty of practically ignoring the last umpteen years. I can definitely say after wrapping my ears around the two tunes that they have on offer, I won't be turning a blind eye to these city residents anymore. They almost have a stripped down, more direct BIG BLACK feel, jerky but not out of control, twisting and turning but never losing that bass-heavy grove, soaking up some of the spazz rock of Chicago's TYRADES and the FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS. Great. There's no messing around from Portland hardcore boys LOPEZ either. The come off as a cranked up version of the BARFEEDERS, with a hint of POISON IDEA and the RANDUMS. They go straight for the throat, no messing around and definitely no tea break—this rocks. (SD)
(Infringement, lopezthebedwetter@yahoo.com)

BROKEN – "Homeland Insecurity" CD
New release from this long running Connecticut punk band, and they continue to crank out their quality mid paced hardcore punk. Nice, gruff vocals spitting out the venom against notions of homeland "security," the rich, and the lie of American way of life, while taking a few potshots at the gossipy bullshit that takes up too much time in the punk scene. Totally solid stuff that folx into simple, classic American hardcore should be certain check out. (MT)
(Feralette, 6204 Hillsboro Rd, Nashville, TN 37215, www.feralette.com)

THE BRUISERS – "Cruisin' for a Bruisin" LP
A reissue of New Hampshire's meanest punk rock Fonzies on the slightly-controversial Taang label. Stripped-down, tough-guy streetpunk fronted by the Mick that ruined DROPKICK MURPHYS, Al Barr (in all fairness they were going that direction anyway). Hailing from that golden period of punk, 1993—oh, what an awful time for music, a barren period of sorts. The BRUISERS fit just right in to this forgettable year, with their almost bar-rock boogie, white-man-roadhouse-blues take on streetpunk. A lot of folks love this band. Then again, a lot of folks also voted for Bush. (SD)
(Taang, 706 Pismo Ct, San Diego, CA 92109, www.taang.com)

THE BRUISERS – " Cruisin' for a Bruisin' " LP
The BRUISERS were one of the most important skinhead bands of their day. Their influence was massive, not only across the United States of America, but in Europe as well. Mr. Al Barr





BLOOD RUNS RED

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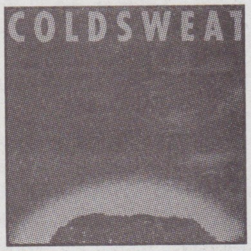

remains one of the top streetpunk singers performing today. This *Cruisin' for a Bruisin'* material was recorded in 1993 in Metropolis Studio, Middleton, Massachusetts, and has stood the test of time well. Songs like "Iron Chin" and "American Night" are truly inspirational!!! This ten-year old material by the mighty BRUISERS will always be revered by real skinheads, and has nothing to do with the political opinions of *Maximumrocknroll* record reviewers in the year 2004. (BR)

(Taang, 706 Pismo Ct., San Diego 92109, www.taang.com)

THEE BUTCHERS' ORCHESTRA – "What About Now?" CD

These dudes rock the rock. They kick out the jams with 60s and 70s influenced, upbeat, riff-heavy rock 'n' roll that's filled with plenty of solos; like those older songs, THEE BUTCHERS' ORCHESTRA tend to play on and on. Their four- and five-minute tunes could be pared down for the CD and dragged out to 10n minutes for the live show, ya know? Pretty fuckin' rockin' nonetheless. Bad ass. (HM)

(Rastrillo, CC71-B1852ELU, Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA)

THE CARBONAS – "Frothing at the Mouth" EP

Of all the great Atlanta bands (BLACK LIPS, LIDS, FRANTIC, and more!), the CARBONAS impress me the most. On this, their third vinyl offering, they take their place near the top of the current *Killed by Death*-influenced pack. Their previous recordings were slightly more aggressive, but if your gonna trade aggression for hooks as infectious as these, there's no reason to complain. Imagine a cross breed of the MARKED MEN with the FINAL SOLUTIONS and you're close. I'm way past frothing and have moved to a steady drool. (MC)

(Douche Master, 212 Berean Ave. #2, Atlanta, GA 30316)

LA CASA FANTOM – "Leter I Mørket" EP

What a weird record—one minute I'm thinking that this is some weird lost CRISIS or MOB recording with a mysterious Norwegian singer and the next thing I know it shifts from artsy depression in full-blown chaotic temper tantrum core *a la* HONEYWELL. Messy, blown out, and distorted with more calm before the storm parts than one can count. Cool. (MT)

(V/Lars ToveRud, Øvreralingsv. 114, 2005 Rœlingen, NORWAY, www.lacasafantom.com)

CAUSTIC CHRIST – "Government Job" EP

CAUSTIC CHRIST continues to deliver the fucking goods—crushing, snarling, and totally pissed off hardcore punk that takes the *Kings of Punk*-era POISON IDEA model and runs with it. Pure unadulterated rage that just screams, "I'm sick of this mother-fucking-goddamn-shit!!" Tops as always. (MT)

(Havoc, PO Box 8585, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

CHEAP SEX – "Headed for a Breakdown" CD

Initially I took one look at this bands name, and was like, "Next!" Then I popped in the CD and was thankfully floored—killer fast, driving, yet melodic punk rock with rough yet discernable vocals spitting out a lyrical attack on war, the FCC, the Bush administration's fucked up environmental policies, corporate entertainment focused "news" and more. Needless to say, I'm pleasantly surprised and stoked as CHEAP SEX seems to totally overpower their sorta dumb name, and smash any misconception people might have of spiky top bands being apathetic and apolitical. Great stuff here. (MT)

(Punkcore, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953, www.punkcore.com)

CHINA WHITE – "Addiction 2" CD

I really liked the *Dangerzone* record from 1981, it was nice, hard, simple American punk that fit in nicely alongside KRAUT and CHANNEL 3, with a touch more of that nihilistic LA bent. I'm guessing that this is a re-release of a follow-up to that record which somehow managed to pass me by. What we have here are a few of the tracks from *Dangerzone* ("Dangerzone," "Addiction," and "Nightlife") rerecorded with a heavier (metal) edge, plus a load of newer tracks in a similar vein. I guess this all went down in 1995, as that's the only date on the cover. Anyway, even though at times this is full-blown crossover, it's still pretty good. Their basic sound is still there, and Jeff Porter's vocals still sound the same. The CD also contains a live show from last year. Good. (AD)

(Malt Soda, PO Box 7611, Chandler, AZ 85246)

CHOSEN FEW – "Really Gonna Punch You Out" 2xLP

This handsomely compiled, gatefold double LP, which comes complete with extensive liner notes, bills itself as "legendary raw bad-ass rock 'n' roll—Australia 1978." If I were lazy I could pretty much leave my review at that. Lucky for you, I am going to provide you with a bit more in the way of background. The CHOSEN FEW is a name already familiar to *Bloodstains* aficionados and Existential Vacuum fanatics, though this is certainly the most comprehensive (and most affordable) way to have the 'FEW's most choice work. Along with their classic *The Joke's On Us* tracks, *Really Gonna Punch You Out* features previously unreleased demo and live tracks, and the album art is even the mega-rare alternate sleeve for their lone EP. Like their more well known Aussie brethren (RADIO BIRDMAN, SAINTS, etc), the 'FEW played primal rock 'n' roll that borrowed as heavily from Detroit circa 1969 as it did from UK '77, perhaps even more so. It has to be said, however, that the 'FEW's brand of punk was certainly much *rawer* than the SAINTS'—their guitar tone almost rivals that of the PAGANS. Fellow *MRR* staffer Tim Brooks once reminded me that there's a reason that collectors go nuts over Aussie punk, most of which went relatively unheard outside of Australia at the time—it exhibits the best aspects of the out-of-control, don't-give-a-fuck attitude that we punks live for, and does so seemingly without any pretense. Get this record, and then look further into Australia's rock 'n' roll history, which started with bands like the MISSING LINKS and really hit its peak with the aforementioned RADIO BIRDMAN, X, FUN THINGS, SUICIDE SQUAD, and the like. (GN)

(Hate, Circ.New Gianicolense 112, 00152, Rome, ITALY, haters@tiscalinet.it)

CLOCKCLEANER – CD

I'll bet the vocalist weighs in at 101 pounds, but he sure belts it out like a tuff guy on this punker disc. The guitar player has it goin' on, but the songs dig into the bass groove and lope along in there like doggies in a flood control channel. So, the late period repeato-AmRep sound is achieved, and I flip the channel. (RW)

(Manic Ride, PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

CLUSTERFUX / APOCALYPTIC CHRIST – split EP

Okay, based on the cover art and band names I thought I'd hate this record. But Colorado's CLUSTERFUX lay down two tracks of straightforward, thrashy punk that are surprisingly good. Their drummer has a serious love for the double bass, but manages to keep it simple and energetic. I gotta give them credit for the song lyrics to "Letter to the President"—"One world. One race. No war!" Six words, 'nuff said. On the flipside, APOCALYPTIC CHRIST style of "end of the world" doom/crust is exactly what I feared. Sounding just like hundreds of other throwaway records I've listened to and hated over the years, it almost makes me wish someone would drop an atomic bomb just to put an end to awful music like this. (VH)

(Less Art, PO Box 16328, Golden, CO 80401)

CODETTA – "Fake the Golden Age" CD

CODETTA play melodic, anthemic punk in the vein of JAWBREAKER or SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE, with elements of more discordant stuff like maybe UNWOUND or even MISSION OF BURMA in places. Like all the best bands, they're a trio and you can feel the intensity that is probably generated between them when they play. I'd like to see them live to get the full effect. Overall, this sounds honest and passionate, and I'll take this over MTV emo like DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL or JIMMY EAT WORLD any day. (AM)

(Surreal, 1259 Commonwealth Ave Suite 6, Allston, MA 02134, www.codettaband.com)

COLD SWEAT – "Blinded" CD

Ugly and mean hardcore. COLDSWEAT's attitude reminds me a bit of the feel of the NIHILISTICS classic LP. We have some serious misanthropy going on here. Furious, late period BLACK FLAG guitar, muscular drums (lots of rolls) and slightly buried tough guy (though not macho shithead style) vocals. Pretty intense damaged shit here. Almost has a late AmRep (when they started to dabble in the more metally stuff) records feel to it at times. Maybe it's just the production. Twelve tracks in all, most under two minutes, these guys get right to the point, bludgeon it and get out. Powerful stuff. Includes booklet with lyrics, photo, and a little info. (RR)

(Manic Ride, PO box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101)

COLOSS – Play Fast CD

COLOSS takes the base of old school hardcore and adds in the rock 'n' roll guitar and new school breakdowns that plague hardcore these days. Dual gruff vocals and a crunchy guitar sound. Not really bad, but not real great. I think one of the problems on this CD is time changes that make *absolutely no sense*! Misplaced breakdowns and choruses make for a not so enjoyable listen. (NT)

(www.hellnation.it)

COMITY – "The Deus Ex-Machina as a Forgotten Genius (Andy Warhol Sucks)" CD

I don't know what is worse, the title of this disc, the song titles, the artwork or the music itself. It's all a fucking pretentious load of shite. Seven-and-a-half minutes into the first song and no end in sight. Track two has a five plus minute long intro. Lame-o "crushing" nu-metal with lots of guitar noodle wank and slowly building quiet parts that lead back to the all together now let's go crashing in…now!! Yippee! Computer generated art of some abstract photo of some ruins you can't quite make heads or tails of, like the cover of a fucking CONVERGE or COALESCE record, or some shit like that. Track seven, the only track without some completely absurd full-of-pretense title is called "Variation on the Same Mistake"…hmmm. Of course, their only contact is a web address. Enjoyed hating this one. If you must know…(RR)

(www.unitededge.com)

CONELRAD – "A Final Dissolution" CD

Here's some unsolicited advice CONELRAD—lose the fucking vocals. I know you think you're being clever and edgy, but they suck. This is über tech-grind weirdness like you would expect from a former guitarist of CREATION IS CRUCIFIXION, basically sounding like a mix of CREATION IS CRUCIFIXION-styled death metal, DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN chaotic hardcore/grind, and free-form noise-rock. For the most part it works quite well, but the abysmal Mike-Patton-wanna-be "look at me I'm weird" vocal delivery almost makes this unlistenable. Fortunately, the positive aspects still outweigh the negative and the dizzying guitar and drum interplay is staggering when this Pittsburgh duo (no bass) stop fucking around and show off the amazing musicianship they're capable of. These guys could be darlings of the Relapse tech-grind circuit provided they stop trying to impress the chicks with their vocal abilities. (EL)

(New Addition Media, PO Box 81162, Pittsburgh, PA 15217, www.newadditionmedia.com)

CONFEDERATS – "Runnin' from the Cops" CD

Snotty punk rock that cooks along at a quick clip—reminds me a bit of the *good* era of BAD RELIGON (*Suffer*, *No Control*, etc.) musically and in the vocal delivery…though they take on a bit different subject matter. Important shit like running from the cops, alien abduction, eating uncooked meat, and roach infestation—I like it. It's fun, stupid and punk! (MT)

(Piggyback)

CONTRAVENE / UPRISING – split EP

Arizona anarcho punks CONTRAVENE have been around for a while now, and on this record they pair up with Michigan punks UPRISING, who share a similar aesthetic and political approach. CONTRAVENE's side is a bit less straightforward, featuring a song that at times sounds like ANTIPRODUCT and at times seems to be borrowing from the moodier, UK peace punk scene. The end of the song features a cringe-worthy hippy sing along part that starts out with the lyrics "children of the earth, are you listening…?" UPRISING offer two anarcho hardcore tunes of the mid-90s variety. I could argue about whether or not anarcho punk of this relatively generic variety is still relevant in 2004, but this is a punk 'zine so I guess it would be a moot point to say I've heard it all before. (GN)

(Catchphraze, PO Box 41356, Phoenix, AZ 85080, www.catchphrazerecords.com)

CONTRIBUTION – "What is Your?" CD

While this band sports quite possibly the worst artwork of 2004, they aren't as bad musically. CONTRIBUTION plays plodding, mid-tempo punk that sorta reminds me of the older, slow D.O.A. songs. Their politics are front and center, but they mix it up with a cute surf number "Police Line," where they start off playing "Police Truck" and twist it into "Pipeline". The reprise is a pretty funny idea, but the execution is kinda painful. This is a fair debut, but I'm sure these guys will kick it up a notch for their next release. (HM)

(Goldenrod, 542 Cumberland Rd, Orange, CA 92865, www.skatepunk.net/goldenrod)

CRIME DESIRE – "We Hate All Life" 12"

This LP is housed in a very nice silk-screened sleeve with a complimentary CRIME DESIRE dog tag. The disc is a 45 RPM 12" with great sound and a nice looking insert with lyrics, info and stuff. Nifty package. Three listens and I'm still having trouble describing this. CRIME DESIRE offer up a spastic, disjointed, off-kilter brand of hardcore. This LP is full of loads of stops and starts, energy and attitude to burn. I like the spirit of the whole thing. I guess FAT DAY could be a reference point if one needs to be made. You have to love the line "Not all who wonder are lost, and anyone with that bumper sticker should be shot." This one is for the more adventurous hardcore fiend. (RR)

(Life's A Rape, PO Box 278, Carlsbad, CA 92018)

CRUEL FACE – "Eu Amo Desgraca...Por Isso Adoro Muito Tudo Isto!" CD

This is decent grind from Brazil, but with all the other good grind acts reviewed in this same issue, CRUEL FACE really pales in comparison and relevance. If you're a fan of all things grind though, you can put your endurance to the test with this hour plus discography of everything these Brazilian grinders ever released. Not bad, but there's nothing really original or noteworthy about any of it—nothing in the 59 tracks that hasn't been done better by countless other bands. (EL)

(Bucho Discos, www.buchodiscos.kit.net)

CURSED – "Hell Comes Home" EP

This two-song record pretty short. It does, however, feature a pretty good song called "Hell Comes Home" about the prices we pay for oil and power. The song is delivered with passion and a nice, thick, driving hardcore sound. The B-side is a cover of the STOOGES' "Search & Destroy" done a whole lot more raw than their original on side A—I wasn't too impressed. I see that this is a pre-release for an upcoming LP; we'll see if the rest of their songs measure up to the title track from this EP. Overall, not bad. (WK)

(Hex 201 Maple Ln., N. Syracuse, NY 13212)

THE DARYLS – "Chinamen Never Eat Chili" CD

Bad band name, worse album title. Sounds like a sped up QUEERS (i.e.: they sound like JON COUGAR CONCENTRATION CAMP). They say *Maximumrocknroll* sucks. I kinda like 'em. (AD)

(www.thedaryls.com)

DEFIANCE – "Rise or Fall" CD

Okay, I'll admit it—I'm sort of a sucker for DEFIANCE. Strong, anthemic punk rock that alternates between blazing ABRASIVE WHEELS-esque hardcore to a more mid-paced, rousing, sing-a-long pogo punk attack. Their second LP, *Nothing Lasts Forever*, is sheer spiky-top, glue-bag punk perfection—just one ripping anthem after another—and is probably one of the best the punk records of the last decade. This though—I mean it has its moments, but something just feels like it's missing. Some tracks, like "Death Squad," "All the Aces," "No Reason" or the scorching album opener "Final Hour" recall some of the finest moments of this long running Portland punk band—but overall it just doesn't feel totally even as an album. So in the end, half the record is great, half is just OK—no total clunker songs and certainly not bad by any means, but its just not up to what this band *can* do. Decent overall. (MT)

(Punkcore, PO Box 916, Middle Island, NY 11953, www.punkcore.com)

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DISRESPECT
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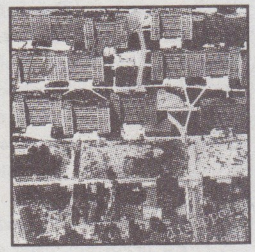


DISCLOSE – “ Yesterday’s Fairytale Tomorrow’s Nightmare” LP

Yet another installment from Japan’s favorite tribute band. As always it’s a beautiful, blown out mess sounding like DISCHARGE’s *Decontrol* 7” recorded onto a piece of dirt and played back through a broken Walkman. The lyrics ape Cal’s anti-war haikus and take it to a ludicrous new level: “dance before me think no more/think no more of crawling chaos”...what??? I would think it was a hilarious joke if I didn’t know the punks who shit their pants over this take it totally seriously. Don’t get me wrong, I’m loving this, but can’t you see the funny side? (TB)

(Game of the Arseholes, PO Box 511, Whippany, NJ 07981-0511)

DISCLOSE / NO FUCKER – split EP

For their side, upstate New York punks NO FUCKER belt out three slabs of thick, mid-paced, hyper-distorted DISCHARGE inspired hardcore—totally ten steps up from the promise of their demos. Tons of energy and great snarled vocals. On the flip we have long running D-beat warriors DISCLOSE, who crank out three blasts of their own DISCHARGE-meets-BROKEN BONES fueled onslaught. Truth be told, this is some of the best DISCLOSE stuff I’ve heard in a bit, as the energy level seems up from their other recent releases. Raw punk for the hardcores only. (MT)

(Overthrow, Maruta Palace #402, 21-5 Shimo Shinshuku Ichikawa, Chiba 272-0102, JAPAN)

DISCLOSE / NO FUCKER – “Noise Not Music” EP

Here we have a split 7” that was put out for the West Coast tour these two bands just did together. DISCLOSE toss down one track of blown-out DISCHARGE/BROKEN BONES worship. NO FUCKER toss down a slightly more mid-tempo, blown out track of DISCLOSE worship. Two bands, one song—played slightly differently This is the soundtrack for studding your leather and drinking cider...the soundtrack of your life. Chaos and destruction in a handy, well-packaged 7”. (NT)

(No Fucker, PO Box 145, Frankfort, NY 13340)

DISRESPECT – “Justice in a Bag” EP

Speedy political punk rock from the Twin Cities featuring a three-vocal attack (two male, one female) layered over a CONFLICT-meets-UK ‘82 punk attack. Though not quite as punchy as the first EP, I’m still really into this—especially for the B-side, which has great melodic guitar work to back up the top-notch political lyrics. (MT)

(Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

DOOMSDAY 1999 – “Maniac on the Floor” LP

Spazzy, disjointed short bursts of fast-and-ugly hardcore mayhem. This band rose from the ashes of TEEN CTHULU. Throat shredding vo-kills, metallic skull pounding riffs, and blast beat brutality is what you get, whether you ask for it or not. I’m gonna go take two aspirin don’t call me in the morning. Ouch. Seventeen tracks and lyric sheet enclosed. (RR)

(Nukes!, travis@rockandroleplay.com)

THE DONKEYS – “Television Anarchy” CD

I first heard this band on some US major label “UK bands” collection back in the day. Now, thanks to the liner notes, I know that they never released an LP, just singles. *Television Anarchy* is a double disc of their singles and unreleased tracks. When I heard this was coming out, I was stoked, as this “power pop” band with touches of mod and punk have a good singles catalog here. From 1979 to 1981 timewise, the unreleased stuff is pretty slick almost in a later BOOMTOWN RATS and XTC way. Although there were bands doing this stuff better, this is still a no-brainer. I was expecting more buried treasures from the 20 unreleased tracks, but this is still recommended. (RL)

(Detour, www.detour-records.co.uk)

DOWN AND OUTS – “Boys from the Blackstuff” CD

Catchy streetpunk from the UK here. A lot of COCKSPARRER influence here, especially vocally. Mix in the guitar lines and riffs of STIFF LITTLE FINGERS and CHELSEA on the 1979-ish side. UK punk fans will dig this new band. (RL)

(Dead And Gone, 42 Glover Rd, Totley, Sheffield, S17 4HN, UNITED KINGDOM)

DRAW BLOOD – “The Calm Before the Storm” CDEP

Seven short songs of well done, modern hardcore with lyrics that range towards the personal end of the personal-political spectrum—at times, this Providence band lyrically recalls their Rhode Island brethren VERBAL ASSAULT. The ultra-clean production detracts from the natural energy and anger of their relatively straightforward hardcore tunes (this is supposed to be punk rock, after all), but *The Calm Before the Storm* manages to get by nonetheless, perhaps because the songs themselves manage to stand out. The hardcore model I prefer is 1981-‘83, and DRAW BLOOD have way too many 90s-styled breakdowns and weird arpeggiated spoken word interludes for that, but this CD should fit nicely in collections that include lots of SUICIDE FILE records. A good effort. (GN)

(Trash Art, PO Box 725, Providence, RI 02901)

DUCKY BOYS – “Three Chords and the Truth” CD

From Boston, the DUCKY BOYS have been around for a while, kind of in the background as the DROPKICK MURPHYS hogged the limelight. They too play tough, melodic punk with a Celtic flavor but with more of a rock/rock ‘n’ roll bend. The songs are divided between punk rock songs, anthems, and ballads, the latter of which gets a little too close to G N’R territory for my liking. This is by far their best-produced and laid-out release for the band to date, and is a good starting point for those who are curious about this band. Sure it’s cheesy, but most street-punk is cheesy, and I was surprised at how well written some of the songs are. Recommended. (AD)

(Thorp, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

EDISON – “Year of the Riot” CD

Punk rock from Huntington Beach, EDISON sounds like what would happen if the OFFSPRING actually played punk. They have a song in which they proclaim that they have “hoochie girls,” so, good for them I guess. If you have a tuft of hair at the end of your chin and like to snowboard, or play Tony Hawk video games all day, this would be right up your alley. Sounds like something that may be on the MONSTER GARAGE soundtrack. (NT)

(Damage Press, PO Box 5911, Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

ENDMONSTER –LP

Emo-ish indie rock that employs a smidge of screamo-garage here, a dab of synth squiggle there to achieve a rather underwhelming whole. Slab of ULTRAVOX between toasted slices of GET HUSTLE...up! The songs just ain’t that great, and they’re trying to get by on delivery and charm. Nah. (RW)

(Narshardaa, Wollbergsredder 9, 24133, Molfsee, GERMANY)

THE ENDS – “Concrete Disappointment” LP

The sophomore release from the ENDS is anything but a disappointment. “Concrete Disappointment” includes both tunes from their recent *New Rome* seven inch, and it kicks ass! The ENDS sound like the STITCHES crossed with the NEW YORK DOLLS. Solid record, and if you want a blue vinyl version, you better be quick and order this online from Dirtnap. (HM)

(Dirtnap, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA, 98111, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

THE ERGS! – “Cotton Pickin’ Minute” EP

Looks like the ERGS! are trying some country on this latest EP. They do some fancy pickin’, happy acoustic strummin’ and bouncy bass lines for this melodic pop/country record. At times I think of the OLD 97S, CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN’s *II & III*, and BUCK OWENS. Plus, this rad record is on pink vinyl! I’m just bummed that they didn’t send me a free copy. (HM)

(Prison Jazz, 431 Birch St, Scranton, PA, 18505, www.prisonjazz.com)

ESCAPADO –“Diene Wahrheit” EP

This is interesting, and kind of hard to describe. ESCAPADO from Germany have a lot of elements at play. One vocalist, who sounds a bit like the singer of DOWNFALL or the DARKEST HOUR and another singer who sounds like someone you would hear on the radio singing for an alternative band. I think I detect a hint of metalcore or screamo or something like that, but I could just be imagining what metalcore and screamo sound like since I don’t really listen to that type of stuff. They also have some pretty catchy parts that could be punk, but also some weird mosh parts. This might fall into a category I really know nothing about at all. Anyway it is well produced, and the lyrics are in German. Go figure. (WK)

(Zeitstrafe Renke, Postfach 28 22, 24518 Neumunster, GEMANY)

ESKE – “Big Trouble in Little Village” EP

Tremendous debut disc from yet another member of Chicago’s prolific Latino punk community. These tracks sound so ‘82. Total rough Midwestern hardcore, they could almost have been lifted from *The Mastertape* comp LP. Early ARTICLES OF FAITH, or even very early DIE KREUZEN for a couple of Midwestern references. For those kids yet to shave, think current Chi-town residents PUNCH IN THE FACE and NO SLOGAN to get you in the ballpark. Get this shit. (TB)

(Southkore, 2814 Spalding Ave, Chicago, IL 60623)

EYE FOR AN EYE – "Dystans" CD

Despite the horrendous, Photoshopped cover and the amazingly clean, "modern" production, this turned out to be a pretty enjoyable listen. Cross between straight up rough punk rock, 25 TA LIFE breakdowns, and a couple "oi oi oi's" thrown in for good measure. Good, enjoyable, new school punk/hardcore. Wow, did I just actually say "Good enjoyable new school punk/hardcore"?!?! (NT)

(Pasazer, www.pasazer.pl)

FAERIES – "Riot in the Hive Mind" CD

A CD in a nice seven-inch package. The artwork is made up of handwritten lyrics, statements, missives and interestingly drawn images. No lame Photoshop computer shit artwork here. This looks OK. I really wanted to like this disc, but three listens in and I wanted to kill. These kids have obviously put some thought and work into the music, ideas, and presentation, but their stop/start, spastic IN/HUMANITY-gone-wrong brand of hardcore I just do not get. This stuff is way too dramatic. The slow, whiny, spoken wordy parts steadily building to the momentous, "okay now, we all come crashing in here" parts in almost every song drive me fucking nuts. Get to the point and get it over with and get out. "Fletcher" had me pulling out my hair. This is really like watching a horrendous play with loads of overacting. Eight pages of lyric/art sheets and I can't find an address. (RR)

(Waking)

FAST TIMES – "No End to This" CD

Loud, fast, tough hardcore that should please both the shaved head and crusty dread crews. I am not a fan of generic hardcore (well... not since I was 18 anyway) and this has enough hooks, tempo changes, and good song-writing to keep me interested and to warrant future listens. The song "Stalking Sandra's" is a corker; there's a few of those on here but that's the best one. There' is also a nice cover of *"Nervous Breakdown."* Good hardcore with a message and...*gasp*...a sense of humor. (AD)

(Poison City)

FORCED REALITY – "Unheard, Unreleased, and Under the Boot" CD

FORCED REALITY was, for what it's worth, one of the "original" US skinhead/oi bands, forming in 1986. This is a bunch of "rare" stuff, largely taken from their reformation period in the late 90s. Covers of the VIOLATORS and CRIMINAL CLASS give a good idea of their interpretation of "Strength Thru Oi!" Better than the rubbish the BUSINESS are doing these days, that's for sure. Not quite sure why they use the *Patriot* LP cover as this sleeve, but...er, you know skinheads...more hair than brains. (RK)

(Thorp,www.thorprecords.com)

FRAMTID / DISCLOSE – "Chainsawtour" split EP

FRAMTID and DISCLOSE have been two of the best bands in Japan for some time now. They play great, distorted punk in the key of DISCHARGE. This record comes with a mini interview by both bands, and a nice collage. This record was released for both bands US tour, but as fate would have it FRAMTID couldn't make it out and were sorely missed. Nonetheless, these are great songs by both bands and this is a solid release. (WK)

(Whisper in Darkness, PO BOX 40113 Portland, OR 97240-0113)

FUCKED UP – "Looking for Gold" 12"

I have to admit this had me thrown for a loop at first. The A-side is one pretty long but catchy and driving hardcore song. So far so good. Flip it over, and you get an extended drum solo that eventually leads into one verse of a song, then becomes an extended whistling solo until the end of the record. I was a little confused until someone more "in the know" on record geek matters tipped me off to the fact that one side of the record has two concurrent tracks. After a bit of skipping around and probably doing some needle damage I discovered the other track. It was worth the effort, as it's some of the best stuff FUCKED UP has done yet. Think intense, direct, passionate hardcore punk with catchy hooks. Unfortunately, I'm not sure you're cool enough to actually get to hear this—it's limited to 300 copies. If you spend your free time on collector scum message boards you probably already have it. If not, you'll just have to wait for the comp CD. (AM)

(no address)

FULL SPEED AHEAD – "Born to Lose" CD

It's about fucking time—how long has this been sitting in the can waiting to come out?! Blazing hardcore from this crucial New Jersey outfit. Well written and executed hardcore, that goes outside of the paddle thrash routine and manages to create memorable songs loaded with tons of melody and hooks. Totally great—too bad the band split up. (MT)

(Manic Ride, PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101, www.maniciderecords.com)

GAI / CTHUWULF – "Killed by Japcore" split EP

This one is titled *Killed by Japcore.* We have here one and three-quarter song from the greats GAI recorded live in 1984. Not the greatest sound but with this kind of stuff it doesn't make much of a difference. Mad noise riot indeed. If you enjoy GAI, CONFUSE or GISM you will enjoy this—though there are better GAI recordings out there. On the flip we have three flipped out noise core rave ups by CTHUWULF. Walls of layered distortion, furious apocalyptic drum rolls, guitar feedback squeals and tortured vocals; what more do you need? Looks nice as well. A split between four very fine labels, I'll just list my favorite. (RR)

(First Blood Family, PO Box 1766, Madison, WI 53701-1766)

THE GEEKS – "From the Start" CD

The GEEKS are a great traditional straight edge hardcore band from South Korea. Their newest recorded material is showcased first on the CD, and is definitely my favorite stuff on here. These songs are their strongest by far (especially Ki Seok's vocals on tracks 1-4). This 34 track CD spanning from 1999 to 2004, is another great example that good straight edge hardcore can be found from all parts of the globe. After meeting Ki Seok at Posi Numbers this year, I appreciate this band even more than before. This guy's love and enthusiasm for hardcore is unparalleled. What an outstanding dude. (CC)

(Kawaii, Carville David, 38 Rue Docteur Dubois, 58110 Chatillon en Bazois, FRANCE)

GIGANTIC BRAIN – "The Invasion Discography" CD

A 63-track discography collection of drum machine electro grind. This collects a 10" and a ton of unreleased stuff from cancelled projects. Most clock in at under 30 seconds. Not all of them work, but there is some interesting stuff here. Fans of GANGLIA will enjoy this. Weirdo synth and goofy drum machine settings and blasts make this thing interesting. Pot-brownie, sci-fi grindcore. (RR)

(Razorback, PO box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738)

HOLLY GOLIGHTLY – "Slowly but Surely" LP

Onetime HEADCOATEE and ascending starlet HOLLY GOLIGHTLY sings softly but carries a big stick—all the better to whack you with. *Slowly but Surely* walks a tightrope path between traditional country, folk balladry and Swinging London beat and groove. The record's got a real understated charm: wheezing organ meets steel guitar on the vacated dance floor, a haze of pipe smoke and whisky breath hanging at eye level. Grindcore mavens—avert your ears. Nimble tunes like "Keeping On," or "Always and Forever" display plenty of easy confidence

FORCED REALITY

disclose
FRAMTID
chainsawtour ~04

GREEN HORNET
BACKLASH

HEAD HITS CONCRETE

and all kindsa grown-up human emotions—they may disappoint those looking for the Next Big Shriek, her admirers will be well pleased. Liam Watson recorded the sessions at London's Toe Rag Studios, but traded his usual sonic overdrive for a much lighter touch. An interesting change of course for jangled nerves. (JH)
(Damaged Goods)

GREEN HORNET – "Backlash" EP

Two tunes with vocals and two instrumentals on this EP. Garage rock in the vein of the OBLIVIANS at their tamest. Side A is too slow for me. If these songs were at twice the speed, I think they would probably be fantastic. Side B picks up the pace. "Teen-Age Trash" is by far the best song—it is fast, frantic and trashy. A nice way to end the record. (CK)
(Kuriosa, Thorbeckelaan 65,7942 CM Meppel, NETHERLANDS, kuriosarecords@yahoo.com)

GRUDGES – "Be Alive" EP

Fast punk rock that is good for the ticker. I would like to draw a comparison to another band, but I can't think of another that anyone would really have heard of. If anything, they remind me of the band that plays in the style that the old Beer City records would have put out, or something that would have been on Mystic. You know, the second-band-on-a-five-band-bill sound. (JF)
(Delta Pop Music, 663 S. Bernardo Ave, Suite 113, Sunnyvale, CA 94087)

THE GUN CLUB – "Miami" LP

One of those bands I didn't appreciate when their record came out in 1982. I was an eleven-year-old punk who liked music fast and full of bad words. Luckily, I am now more mature so I can appreciate the greatness of Jeffrey Lee Pierce and gang. Drug-damaged LA rock and roll with a country twang. Beautifully painful music with ominous and haunting vocals. Debbie Harry does backing vocals on this under the pseudonym D.H. Laurence Jr. It is on pretty blue vinyl too. (CK)
(Sympathy for the Record Industry, www.sympathyrecords.com)

THE GUN CLUB – "Death Party" LP

For some reason, Sympathy has decided to re-release all of the GUN CLUB's records at the same time. This works out pretty well for us here at *MRR*, as Tim decided at some point to purge the collection of their records. Their sound certainly isn't punk, but they were somewhat edgy for their time. And I can tell you that he left some other stuff in the collection that is totally lame. I was never a big fan of the GUN CLUB. They had songs here and there that I thought were pretty good, but I never got into them as a band. They always struck me as a weird combination of X, the HOODOO GURUS and the CURE. This record is from 1983 and it was "digitally remastered," for what it is worth. (KK)
(Sympathy for the Record Industry, www.sympathyrecords.com)

THE GUN CLUB – "The Las Vegas Story" LP

Another one of the GUN CLUB reissues hitting the shelves this month—glad to see 'em all back in print where they belong, and hope that they'll find their way to the listeners who require them the most. Released in 1984, the third GUN CLUB LP presents a definite expansion of the band's sound—moving away from the aggro blues-punk that drove *The Fire of Love* and, to a lesser extent, *Miami.* At this point, singer Jeffrey Lee Pierce had taken the group's reins following a major restructuring—recruiting Patricia Morrison (once of LA's BAGS, later to join gothic creep-machine SISTERS OF MERCY) and Kid Congo Powers (later to replace guitarist Bryan Gregory in the CRAMPS). The record's a bit more ambitious, hoping to present a broadly-painted tableau capturing the vices, hopes, sins and debts of Las Vegas and all who dwell therein. "Walking with the Beast" is a pretty fun track that hearkens back to their earlier days, while "Give Up the Sun" hints at the slicker approach the band would adopt on later releases. Fans will dig it all. *The Las Vegas Story* is a case of both less and more—the record lacks the hell-fire overdrive of their debut LP, but smoothes out the stylistic inconsistencies that made *Miami* sort of a drag. (JH)
(Sympathy for the Record Industry, www.sympathyrecords.com)

THE GUV'NORS – "Yob-Pop" EP

These melodic oi! pop-meisters began life in Aarhus, Denmark in 2001 and have been entertaining streetpunk and football fans ever since. These guys have the infectious melodies, the hooks, and the catchy guitar bits that you look for in a good pub-rock band! Side A starts with the mid-paced "Do Not Disturb," and proceeds to "It'll be Allright". It would appear that these guys have done their homework. One can hear SLADE and COCK SPARRER influences. Side B picks up the tempo a little with "Get the World to Me," "Sunday After Sunday," and "Mad as a Hatter." This is a damn good record! (BR)
(Trash 2001, PO Box 10 16 553, D-46216, Bottrop, GERMANY)

HAMMER – LP

HAMMER trace their influences to distinguished veterans like GAUZE—tight, traditional Japanese hardcore distinguished by rockin' song structures with ubiquitous vocal choruses and whistle-clean production. This follow-up to their EPs certainly has its share of power, but could profit from more attention to tuneage; the longish songs sometimes suffer from going on longer than they should. I loved the inventive vocals on the excellent song that opens the record. Good for the genre. (SS).
(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

HAPPY BASTARDS / HUMAN CERTAINTY – split LP

Am really into the HAPPY BASTARDS stuff—cool melodic female fronted punk rock that takes its cues from a mixture of the GITS and LA FRACTION. Dynamic, powerful, punchy punk rock backing up a powerful lyrical delivery. Great stuff, and I really hope they come play in the Bay Area sometime soon. On the flip we have fellow Oregonians who churn out three cuts of skull- crushing depravity. Lurching heaviness that is the spawn of bands like DYSTOPIA but significantly more metal. I'm not so into it, but maybe you are? HAPPY BASTARDS rule, okay! (MT)
(N.F.N., PO Box 10384, Eugene, OR 97440)

HELLSHOCK / EFFIGY– "USA Meets Japan" split 10"

Anyone who would dispute the fact that HELLSHOCK and EFFIGY are by far the most ferocious bands crust has produced in nearly a decade is lying through their rotten teeth. HELLSHOCK play the most memorable thrash I have heard in ages, inspired by bands such as SACRILEGE, AMEBIX, DEVIATED INSTINCT, and ANTI-SECT, to name a few, although they do so with a unique style— something that so many bands lack these days. The EFFIGY side starts off a little monotonously compared to some of their previous records, but once they get going they manage to pull off some great, insanely distorted, crust war doom. The high- quality recordings by both bands and brilliant artwork by Mid only add to the conclusion that this record is a classic. Find it now! (WK)
(Wicked Witch, PO Box 3835, 1001 AD Amsterdam, NETHERLANDS)

HERO DISHONEST / MUKEKA DI RATO – split EP

MUKEKA DI RATO from Brazil starts this off with some ganja-fied fastcore, blending the two spirits of BURZUM and BOB MARLEY, and finish with a quirky, thrashy punk. They are one of my favorite bands right now because they haven't pigeon holed themselves into one specific style of punk. They just write great hardcore songs with downright poppy hooks. HERO DISHONEST, from Finland, lay down some great, thrashy hardcore that is interesting and played with heart. Killer cover of JOY DIVISION's "Warsaw" to round it out. A very worthwhile record to spend your allowance on. (NT)
(625, www.625thrash.com)

HEWHOCORRUPTS – "The Discographer" CD

61fucking blast core tracks of tough and speedy grind from 1998-2003. Blast beats galore with grind and crust-sounding guitars. GODSTOMPER and maybe IRON LUNG could be reference points. Everything these guys released and more is all here. I counted 13 unreleased studio, demo and live radio trax. Much of this is taken from probably somewhat hard to find split EPs. I enjoyed the first ten blasts the most, a previously unheard live in radio studio set from a WZRD broadcast. The packaging is a sort of clever piss-take/parody of corporate America's absurd dailies *a la* the *Financial Times*. The artwork and the goofy cover of GUNS 'N' ROSES' "Welcome to the Jungle" attest to these guys' humor, but clowns they are not, as this is some serious brutality. A nice, convenient (isn't that what CDs are all about?) collection for fans and grind freaks alike (if there are any left). (RR)
(www.forgeagainrecords.com)

HEWHOCORRUPTS / FKS – split EP

Another awesome three tunes from HWC, who have ex-members of KUNG FU RICK, and are basically the grindcore extension thereof. At times, the speed and intensity of the guitars and especially the drums make comparisons to the likes of PIG DESTROYER not inappropriate, but the goofy vocals and lyrics sometimes get in the way. I know that's part of their schtick and it's cool that they're not all metal serious, but if these guys quit fucking around they could be one of the top bands in grind—they're already pretty close. As for FKS, I'm liking them more here than on their CDEP that I reviewed last issue. I still think they could tighten and speed up the riffs, but they've definitely got some good song-writing ideas and have potential to be a potent metal-core band in time. (EL)

(Take it Back, 2012 11th St. Pl., East Moline, IL 61244, www.takeitbackrecords.com)

HIDDEN CHARMS – "Right Now!" EP

Claiming their influence from a variety of San Francisco garage punk legends, HIDDEN CHARMS blast out their tunes with a melodic fury. They are fast, reckless, and fun. They even cover one of my all-time favorite songs, "Roadrunner." (CK)

(My Ruin, Postfach 3107, 49021 Osnabruck, GERMANY)

HIPBONE SLIM & THE KNEE TREMBLERS – "What Do You Look Like / I'm Gonna Give You Everything"

Nice little novelty rocker from an all-star cast of the HOLLY GOLIGHTLY/MILKSHAKES/SIR BALD DIDDLEY galaxy (from forthcoming album) with a rockabilly-ish non-LP B-side. (DD)

(Voodoo Rhythm, Jurastrasse 15, 3013 Bern, SWITZERLAND, www.voodoorhythm.com)

HOLOKAUST / AGAINST EMPIRE – split EP

From the depths of a hell known as Southern California AGAINST EMPIRE and HOLOKAUST emerge. HOLOKAUST reminds me of DECONTROL, with some pretty rough vocals. They don't go into much detail with their lyrics either. Three songs that tally at five short lines apiece. I guess they get right to the point. These songs are definitely better than their recent split with DISSYSTEMA, though not as good as the debut EP. In the first of their two songs, AGAINST EMPIRE plays some charging political punk like DEFIANCE mixed with LITMUS GREEN, then they switch up singers to hit you with the good old Cookie Monster crust attack *a la* DOOM, though they still keep the DEFIANCE charge going. Lyrics dealing with deforestation and pollution. (WK)

(Threat To Existence, xagaintempirex@aol.com)

HRYDJUVERK! / PATIENT ZERO – split EP

You'd think after hearing punk records from all over south and central Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East, I would stop being surprised about the remote locales from which bands emerge. It's certainly a continuing testament to the vitality of the DIY ethic and the timeless sound of a raw, fucked-up guitar that bands like HRYDJUVERK! keep cropping up all over the world, in this case in Iceland. This record, however, gets by on more than sheer novelty value. HRYDJUVERK! plays raw, aggressive hardcore that easily stands up with bands like SLEEPER CELL, and is as good as most things coming out of the US right now. They are at their best when they let their Swedish hardcore influence really show—the few slowed-down, "crusty" moments don't quite have the same flair. In any case, their side (which includes three originals and a DISCHARGE cover) features intense, above-average, hardcore punk. I look forward to hearing more from them. On the flip side is the UK's PATIENT ZERO. When I was a freshman in high school, the older punk boy I had a crush on (times have changed…) was in a band by that name, but they did SEX PISTOLS and NIRVANA covers and pretty much sucked. This PATIENT ZERO is better, and plays mostly fast hardcore with lots of tempo changes. The vocals are good, and there are a few memorable guitar riffs, but as is often the case with this kind of hardcore I started losing interest every time a blast beat is played. Worth it for the HRYDJUVERK! side, for sure. (GN)

(Holy Shit, Cardigan Centre, 145-149 Cardigan Rd, Leeds L56 1RR, UNITED KINGDOM)

MIKE HUDSON – "Unmedicated" CD

Yeah, decades later Mike Hudson (of PAGANS fame) still has one of the best vocal styles in punk, the perfect cracked-gruff primitive gutter wail. These tracks are all keyed to a bitter confessional theme, not garage-energy-driving-off-a-cliff, but more like standing on the edge of that same cliff thinking of good reasons not to jump. Some of the songs plod a bit, but you get the sense that it's because it's a pure solo project made with friends, so that cuts out the "frustrated band" factor to an extent. The songs themselves are solidly in the vein of Hudson's 80s "comeback" stuff, so if you dig, say, Peter Laughner solo stuff you will dig this, period. (RW)

(Sonic Swirl, PO Box 111202, Cleveland, OH, 44111)

HUMAN BASTARD – "After the Last Bomb" EP

These guys seem downright angry. They want to be left alone by society, they don't want to work your fucking jobs and waste their lives, they don't want the cops beating them up with their guns, and they are a little worried about what the world will be like after the last bomb has fallen. I mean, who can blame them? They express this outrage through crusty punk rock with guttural vocals blurted out over the top. Pretty good stuff to blast out of your stereo when you have had a shitty day and want to pump your fist in the air and remember that you are a punk. (NT)

(La Idea, Apdo Correos 18251, 28080 Madrid, SPAIN)

HUMAN POWER – "Human Power?" EP

Oh man, this is not so good. This is maybe like early Earache-style hardcore, not quite grind from the UK with bad sound quality, an atrocious drum machine, agonizingly bad vocals and uninteresting riffs. Good political lyrics indicate their hearts are in the right place but no thanks on the vehicle of expression. (EL)

(Distortion Party, mark@sarcasm.fsnet.co.uk)

IDORA – "Farewll Message / Kokokara"

We have some serious, thunderous, sledgehammer heavy, mid-tempo HC from Tokyo here. IDORA gives us two long songs. "Farewell Message" is the keeper here. It has an epic feel with long black metal-like melodic breakdowns. The song has a gloomy, doomy (not the band) minor chord feel to it, kind of dark and depressing. These guys bring to my mind mid-era DIE KREUZEN, similar vocally and in spirit. As with most Japanese HC, this is good, adventurous, raging stuff, though I fear it might be a bit slow for some. (RR)

(Shinji Wakabayashi, Revive, 30. Nakajima-cho, Momoyama-cho, Fushimi-ku, Kyoto. 612-8005, JAPAN)

INTENT – "Double" CD

INTENT, a British band, play hardcore punk that falls somewhere between 7 SECONDS and tougher stuff like SICK OF IT ALL and other NYHC. They stay pretty straightforward but get melodic at times. Good, positive message in their lyrics. (WR)

(Suspect Device, PO Box 295, Southampton, SO17 1LW, UNITED KINGDOM, www.suspectdevicehq.co.uk)

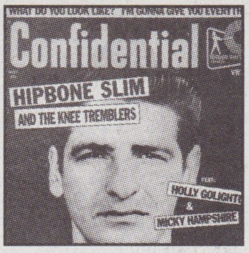
JAPANISCHE KAMPFHURSPIELE – "Hardcore Der Ersten Welt" CD

We have here thirteen tracks of metallic, technical hardcore from Germany. Muscular drumming and riff after riff after riff…chugga…chugga. Low, Cookie Monster/screamed call and response vocals, crystal clear production and lots o' mosh. Don't quite know what they are on about 'cause I don't speak-a de Deutsch, but they sound as serious as a heart attack. They also sound a bit silly to me. (RR)

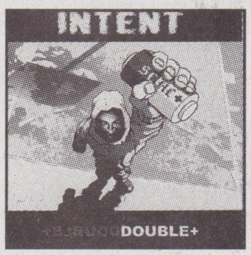
(Bastardized, PO Box 200521, 56005, Koblenz, GERMANY)

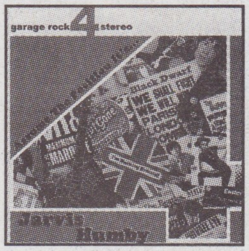
JARVIS HUMBY – "Assume the Position" CD

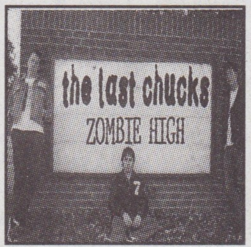
Some bitter old crank once announced that "tough guys don't dance," but he'd never heard JARVIS HUMBY (so let him be). *Assume the Position* is unexpected, exciting, fresh (not stale), and



HUMAN POWER
Human Power?







both relentlessly powerful and *nice-sounding.* They're a self-described "garage mod" group with an ace songbook, Hammond organ, fully functional horn section—and 21st Century aesthetic lurking behind tunes like "Vampyros Hetros" and "Man with the X-Ray Eyes." Perfect music for the breaking of ice, the nodding of heads, and stomping of toes on the dance floor. A mod historian like Sean Duggan could dissect the influences better than I, but I can pry out hints of the ANIMALS, WHO, 60s beat-era London, fog-bound Northern Soul, the forward propulsion of '79 Two Tone, and the permanent 60s-is-now garage revival. Utterly thrilling. (JH)

(Hard Soul, www.hardsoulrecords.com)

JELLO BIAFRA WITH THE MELVINS – "Never Breathe What You Can't See" CD

Following his other joint projects with D.O.A. and NOMEANSNO, the latest Jello Biafra collaboration is with the MELVINS, and although I was never the biggest fan of theirs—too heavy, too rock—I was looking forward to hearing this, for Jello's latest take on the world if nothing else. The music is in a similar vein to the other releases, the band do their thing over which Jello rants and raves. The MELVINS play things a little straighter (re: punker) than usual, with enough hooks to keep things afloat. It reminds me the TUMOR CIRCUS stuff a lot, though this is better. "Enchanted Thoughtfist" is a killer tune, like a heavy SHADOWY MEN FROM A SHADOWY PLANET over which Biafra sings "Don't just question authority—Don't forget to question me." The lyrics are brilliant as usual, this time around Attorney General John Ashcroft comes in for quite a battering, as well as yuppie SUV owners, airport security guards, and former Soviet nations nuclear weapons on the black market. Most of you are probably already in the either-love-him-or-don't-camp, but I've always found Jello Biafra's reflections on the world-at-large very inspiring, and in my little world he is the one of the greatest lyricist ever. "Followers" will enjoy this latest installment from their anti-guru, others should give it a listen. (AD)

(Alternative Tentacles)

JESUS OF NAZARETH – "Braid of Muscle" CD

Industrial techno blast grind with programmed drums and samples and a bit of power electronics and electro noise. We have some pretty harsh stuff here. Black metal like wailing vo-kills as well as death metal growling. Seems to be a two-piece, one J. Cregger and one R. Mason. A nice fancy booklet full of photos of religious iconography, but little info with no song titles, lyrics etc. (RR)

(RSR, c/o Sandro Gassner, Str. Des Friedens 45, 07819, Mittel Pollnitz, GERMANY)

JUNTTA – "Koullismaa" EP

A hardcore NEW MODEL ARMY from Finland?! Driving melodic punk rock with weird layers of instrumentation—I mean it sounds like they might have an extra percussion person in the band playing counter rhythms and the song "Pullotettua Ilmaa" has a bassline that sounds like it could have been lifted off NEW MODEL ARMY's *Vengeance* LP. First listen made me sorta adverse to this record, but after repeated listens this is really growing on me. Really hook laden and totally infectious. (MT)

(Stay Free Underground, PL 264, 33101 Tampere, FINLAND, www.sfu-records.com)

KARKABA – "Alperrik Galdukoaiz" EP

Spain has had its fair share of excellent raw punk bands lately, and in a sea of this month's mediocre hardcore records, KARKABA really stands out as being the real deal. They play a mixture of traditional Spanish punk (i.e. UK influenced) and something a bit more chaotic (and by chaotic, I mean WRETCHED, not ORCHID). The suitably raw guitar tone, hectic drumming, and agonized vocals are what put this record over the top, as they keep the mid-paced, more punked-out numbers from losing any intensity. This relentless record is in the "must buy" category for this month's hardcore fans for sure. (GN)

(Tutti Pazzi, BM WC1N, 3XX London, UNITED KINGDOM, jesuscrustuk@yahoo.co.uk)

KEGCHARGE – "Sadistic War Glory" 12"

KEGCHARGE deserve credit for the funniest D-beat name ever, not to mention classic shirts depicting a plane dropping kegs of beer. Don't be fooled though, these guys are dead serious in every other aspect of this band. You will be pulverized with the awesome D-beat fury of KEGCHARGE directly from members of WORLD BURNS TO DEATH and SPAZM 151. This is nine songs of rage against the entire military industrial complex and all those who support it. This is a huge step in sound production from their demo, this record also comes in full color gatefold that will blow your mind! (WK)

(Hardcore Holocaust www.hardcoreholocaust.com)

KILLER DREAMER – LP

Now this is an odd band. Side A comes off like weird 80s UK punk/hardcore hybrid, while Side B features some really catchy 70s-flavored punk rawkers. Although the overall mood is gloom 'n' darkness, they move from genre to genre in a fairly seamless manner. I don't find myself bouncing around the room to any of it, but this disc will certainly keep you on your toes. (MC)

(Kapow, PO Box 286, Fullerton, CA 92836)

KOBAYASHI / KOYAANISQATSI – split EP

Two Bremen bands here with one of those multi-label DIY releases. In the spirit of European co-operation, this comes in a nicely-printed sleeve with a booklet containing the lyrics translated into four different languages. Both bands play earnest, dark, gloomy anarcho hardcore—KOYAANISQATSI have one long epic song on their side, while KOBAYASHI serve up three shorter ones. Decent stuff, and coming to a distro box near you soon. (AM)

(Alerta Antifascista, PO Box 2318, 24913 Flensburg, GERMANY, www.no-pasaran.org)

KOHU–63 – "Korkeapaineistettu Hullujenhuone" LP

It seems that most of Finland's early 80s hardcore greats have either reformed or never really broke up, and most of them continue to play aggressive hardcore punk to this day. RIISTETYT and KAAOS' most recent records are great, and this fall's RATTUS East Coast tour featured possibly the best show I've ever seen at ABC No Rio. Now KOHU–63, whose new lineup feature members of KAAOS and BASTARDS, has released a new record for us Finnish hardcore fanatics. At their best, KOHU–63 were almost as good and had a similar feel to their country mates LAMA. While this is good Finnish thrash with a couple of really memorable sing-along moments, it lacks the punch of their early EPs. That said, this is a worthwhile record (despite the sometimes distracting guitar noodling) with some great moments, which adds to rather than diminishs this band's legacy. Pick up Hohnie's early discography of KOHU-63, and then get this if your completist tendencies don't let you sleep at night. (GN)

(Hohnie, An Der Kuhtranke 7, 31535 Neustadt, GERMANY)

KRUMBUMS – "Cut Into Me" EP

Texan spikey tops deliver four UK '82 inspired rippers. Like a lot of the usual suspects (UNSEEN, CLIT 45, etc) they take from old UK punkers like ABRASIVE WHEELS and SKEPTIX, but add a little more bite and punch. At times they veer into hardcore territory. This release doesn't hold up against fellow Austin residents COMPLETE CONTROL for catchy songwriting, but I'll be keeping my eye on these boys for sure. (TB)

(Slab O Wax, PO Box 461082, San Antonio, TX 78246)

KRUW – "The Punx" EP

Oh man! Totally top-notch stuff here—fast, primitive, raw, tuneful, garage-y hardcore that just cooks. Think along the same lines as recent heartthrobs like ETA, REGULATIONS, or the last ADDICTION EP. Just go, go, go!! Top record of the month! (MT)

(Partners In Crime, PO Box 11787, Portland, OR 97211)

KUOLLEET KUKAT – "Antologia 84-86/93-95" 2xCD

Anthology of one of the more obscure Finnish combos who released one 7" and a couple of demos in the early 80s, then returned in the early 90s for a couple more 7"s. The early stuff is really rough and simplistic but has that charm that a lot of the rough-and-ready Finn bands have. Maybe it's the vocals? The later demos from the 80s are much darker and almost gothic at times with the addition of a synth. The 90s tracks sound like a different band, with *way* bigger production and more of a metallic feel, sounding like a POISON IDEA-influenced ROVSVETT. Decent double disc, especially for the early goods. (TB)

(Fight, Hikivuorenkatu 17 D 36, 33710 Tampere, FINLAND)

THE LAST CHUCKS – "Zombie High" CD

The LAST CHUCKS play pop punk that isn't across-the-board horrible but is pretty nauseating at some points (mainly due to the high vocal mix). Their songs sound something like a mix between LILLINGTONS and GREEN DAY, though they dress more like the RIVERDALES. This CD is dedicated to the memory of Joey Ramone, so cheers to that. (WR)

(www.thelastchucks.com)

THE LEECHES – "Integration / Ghost Ship"

Organ, bass and drums (maybe just bass and drums on the flip, though there's something that sounds like a jet taking off that could be organ or guitar) with a full sound that can't help but remind me of some of the MUMMIES' moodier instrumentals. Yeah, it's all about me. Anyway, good work fellas. (DD)

(Kapow, PO Box 286, Fullerton, CA 92836, www.kapowrecords.com)

LES HELL ON HEELS – “My Kind of Trouble” LP

These glam girls sound like they look, and that's like the rock 'n' roll phase of the PANDORAS with a bit of the RUNAWAYS. These hot mamas have the sense to mix it up a bit and toss in some extra attitude and kind hooks. Not too shabby. (HM)
(Bomp!, PO Box 7112, Burbank, CA 91510, www.bomp.com)

LEYTON BUZZARDS – “The Punk Collection” CD

I was hoping this would be a complete discography, but it's not quite. There are fifteen tracks from this 1977-ish Brit band on this disc. Although there are some great punk tracks here including “19 and Mad” and “Land of the Free,” this also includes slower stuff in an almost early KINKS vein. This is a great listen, as all the songs are strong, just don't expect the SEX PISTOLS grit. (RL)
(Captain Oi!)

THE LIDS - LP

Marking a strong return to that classic “Rip Off Records Sound,” this fantastic LP brings to mind the simplistic snotiness of past greats like SUPERCHARGER and LOLI AND THE CHONES. Throw in some strong girl-group nuances and one hell of a live show and you've got yourself a winner. Fortunately for all of us, the flawless execution place the LIDS in a group far above the mediocre bands this genre has endured for the past couple years, making this an essential purchase for those longing for the days of Xeroxed sleeves and smirks through sunglasses. Recommended and red fucking *hot*! (MC)
(www.ripoffrecords.org)

LOST SOUNDS – LP

I wish the LOST SOUNDS—or some unnamed group like them—were making records when I was a maladjusted teenager with zits. They woulda been the perfect background score for my most damaging days. Productive like few others, they're a group with their eyes trained toward the far-distant, science-fictional future while keeping their feet rooted in the caveman past—book-taught *homo erectus* armed with electric guitars and synths. Their latest combines their usual two-fisted energy and forward drive, balances it with high-tech trickery, and presents the results in crystal-clear focus. A real leap forward in terms of *quality,* here. “There's Nothing,” “Destructo Comet” and “I Sit, I Watch, I Wait,” are instant classics that really shiver my timbers—thanks to Jay Reatards' overdriven guitar buzz and Alicja's hypnotic synths and smooth vocals. Better than late-night public access TV and cheaper than therapy—I can't recommend it highly enough. (JH)
(In the Red, PO Box 50777, Los Angeles, CA 90050, www.inthered.com)

THE LOW BUDGETS – “Aim Low, Get High” LP

Goof punk. These guys were probably listening to a lot of ANGRY SAMOANS when they went to record this (or maybe I just been listening to too much VOM). They have some similarities in spirit and vocal delivery to the SAMOANS, most obvious on “Whistleblower.” This thing is catchy and dorky with a cheesy cheap ass organ sound. Pretty fucking cornball, but has a few charming moments. This is one of those, “I get it, and love it” or “fuck, let's play Frisbee with this thing.” The AUTOMATICS come to my mind. Fifteen tracks. I love the cover—great DIY artwork, with two inserts. (RR)
(Akhenation, 1025 Hamilton, Philadelphia, PA 19123)

LURKERS – “Fulham Fallout” LP

Down on their luck and far from photogenic, England's LURKERS always had an uphill battle competing with class-acts like contemporaries the CLASH, RUTS, or even GENERATION X. The basic elements were all in place: bad-boy image, drainpipe trousers, spiky Johnny Thunders 'dos. The burning need to please punters and the record buying public alike. Their music was good enough: tunes like “Ain't Got a Clue,” “I Don't Need to Tell Her,” (the admittedly classic) “Shadow,” “I'm on Heat,” and “Be My Prisoner” are fun stuff, rough and raw with buzzsaw RAMONES guitar and easy-to-remember melodies—but were also repetitive, short on brains and occasionally slow as molasses. *Fulham Fallout* collects everything you'd ever need to hear from the band, and presents it all with stunning fidelity: it's a bootleg of their old Beggars' Banquet LP, and comes through nice and loud with a slick cover and good quality sound. Me, I like 'em despite their occasional mediocrity—they were no SHAM 69, but they weren't the DEPRESSIONS, either. (JH)
(bootleg, no address)

THE MAGGOTS – “What a Girl Can't Do / Whole Lotta Nothing Goin' On”

I don't know how many times it has happened before. I get to the *MRR* house (location top secret), look at the record review assignments and see that I've been assigned “The MAGGOTS” EP. My first thought is that somebody has reissued the classic EP from the Bay Area band of the late 70s or early 80s. I owned a copy once and it was absolutely great. I traded for a couple of Australian rarities, so I didn't get taken, but I still regret the deal to a certain degree. Of course, this is not a reissue of that record, but rather a new slab of wax from some crazed, fuzzed-out Swedes. And the thing is, it's pretty damn good, in an easy sort of way. They do a decent cover of “What a Girl Can't Do,” a song that I have always liked, and a good original. It's 60s-inspired garage punk. It's quite good, but a little too easy, if you know what I mean. (KK)
(Hipsville, http://www.themaggots.com)

MALKOVICH - “A Criminal Record” CD

Combining harsh, melodic vocals with anthemic guitar leads and well-executed breakdowns I can definitely see people liking this band, but all I hear is tired 90s Victory Records re-hash. The sound is way more BY THE GRACE OF GOD than EARTH CRISIS... lots of guitar noodling, but no chugga-chugga. I had a hard time taking this stuff seriously ten years ago, but if you own a headband or a pair of Nikes you'll probably like this... (VH)
(Reflections, Klarendalseweg 456-457, 6822 GW Arnhem, THE NETHERLANDS)

MANIKIN –“ M.4” EP

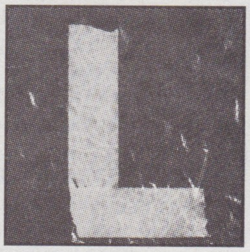
I'm only one tune in, and I can tell ya that these Austin cats have shot right into my top ten of the year. Peddling that almost suicidal, eerie sound that I love. Drenched in atmosphere and stinking of some sweaty, nameless club from Manchester, 1977. The FUSES, WARSAW, and the WIPERS all come strongly to mind. A quick flip over and whatta ya know, “Shadowplay” by JOY DIVISION, and a faultless cover it is indeed, totally capturing that band's trademark sound. Already one LP in and another one in the making, this could very well be one off my favorite finds of 2004. Perfect. (SD)
(Super Secret, PO Box 1585, Austin, Texas 78767, www.themanikin.com)

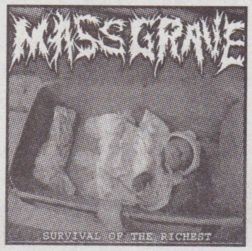
MASS GRAVE – “Survival of the Richest” EP

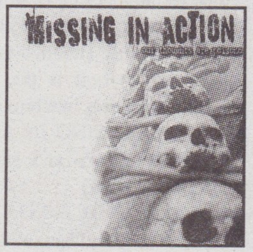
Fast and aggressive politically-slanted crustcore from Vancouver, Canada. The pace of the music and dual vocal attack is relentless here. I really dug it and if you are a fan of bands like STATE OF FEAR you will to. (RC)
(Barrage Of Salt, PO Box 18001, Seattle, WA 98118, barrageofsalt@yahoo.com)

ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES – “Ruin Jonny's Bar Mitzvah” CD

Fourteen “new” classics suitably punkified by the punk rock supergroup tribute band and recorded live at said event. You get







PUNK
MOTOSIERRA

"Stairway To Heaven," "Heart of Glass," "Come Sail Away," "Strawberry Fields Forever," "Auld Lang Syne," "On My Mind," and more you'll recognize. Also, there are some rather witty liner notes and "stage" banter. Perhaps their best yet. (RK)
(Fat Wreck,www.fatwreck.com)

THE METHADONES – "Not Economically Viable" CD

The latest release from this Chicago band fronted by Dan Schafer (aka Dan Vapid) of SCREECHING WEASEL and SLUDGEWORTH fame. Certainly the poppiest release I've heard from these guys. Not in a slick sense but in a hooky, pop punk way. This really reminds me of the classic SLUDGEWORTH stuff. Fans of pop punk rejoice! (RL)
(Thick, www.methadones.com)

MIDNIGHT TRAMP – "I'm Back" EP

…actually, I took one look at the cover of this thing and wanted to smash it to little bits!!!!!!! Man, what a lousy name!!!!! MIDNIGHT TRAMP???? Jesus!!!!! *but*…I gave this little piece of shit a spin and I'm embarrassed to say that I'm just stoned enough to really dig these guys.!!!! Three really well written rock n roll songs that got their influences all over the place… I hear STONES, DOLLS, BOB SEGER, BEATLES, HOLLIES, STEVE JONES, KINKS and everything on Greg Shaw's Top 40!!!!! Great motherfucking guitar tone!!!!! Makes my asshole hurt!!!! No info on the record telling where these bozos are from… I hope it's not Sweden for Christ-sakes!!!!! Regardless, this is a pretty fucking good record!!!!! So let's fuck… (SW)
(Zaxxon Virile Action, www.zaxxonvirileaction.com)

MISSING IN ACTION – "Our Thoughts are Poisonous" CD

These kids play a mix of pogo punk, straight forward hardcore, and a little ska. This works pretty well on some songs, but hurts my ears on others. At times they remind me of early UNSEEN if fronted by the singer of CAUSE FOR ALARM; there are parts that sound a bit like the MAJOR ACCIDENT demos too. Then, to my dismay, they threw in a LEFTOVER CRACK ska number. There are two singers whose lyrical content deals with current issues, such as Bush's foreign policy, class warfare, and rebellion. Hope all the focus on G.W. Bush doesn't have a backlash of apathy when the next President takes office though, because although he may be a figurehead for all that is evil, it is the corrupt government that empowers leaders like him and it won't change when he is out. MISSING IN ACTION has good, angry, adolescent energy and strong political intentions. Good work. (WK)
(Upright, PO BOX 60553, Chicago, IL 60660-0553)

MORTE / D.E.R. – split LP

Here is some fine Brazilian punk for your listening pleasure. First off we have D.E.R. who play some mid-tempo to fast punk with an aggressively crunchy edge and some catchy hooks that remind me of BORN AGAINST. On the flipside MORTE slam the pedal to the metal with an all out assault of blast beat grindcore. The insane drumming leads the way with the sharp choppy growls of the vocalist keeping right up with the pace. (RC)
(Peculio, Caixa Postal #393, Santos—SP, 11001-970, BRASIL, www.peculiodiscos.com.br)

THE MOTHERS ANGER – "Scream" LP

You would never guess that this wall of sound is a two-piece band. They play some heavy post punk rock jams that would sound right at home in an arena setting. I'd say they're like emo crossbred with RADIOHEAD. The faster songs are alright, but the slow songs are excruciatingly painful. (HM)
(Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507, www.dionysusrecords.com)

MOTOSIERRA / CULPABELES – "Hot Music for Hot Chicks" – split CD

A kind of weird split of two Argentine bands. All of these things appear on this CD: a "sexy" devil woman giving me bedroom eyes, and a very suggestive shot of said she-devil's rear end, a GG Allin t-shirt, the phrase "666 Rock 'n' Roll," and requests for beer. All of these fit in well with MOTOSIERRA energetic punk 'n' roll sound—they appropriately round out their half of the split with a cover of "I Love Livin' in the City." On the other hand, CULPABELES play emotive, melodic punk, which is at its best on their faster, more primitive songs. I'm not sure how the tattooed boozers in MOTOSIERRA hooked up with the nerdy-lookin' college boys in CULPABELES, but I am all for punk rock unity so I was into it. Despite the horrible artwork, this wound up being a pretty decent split. (GN)
(Rastrillo, rasillorecords@yahoo.com)

MUDDY RIVER NIGHTMARE BAND – "Too Fat for Love" EP

Sometimes I think that punks get too caught up in the history of things and don't give the new bands their due. Unfortunately, this is not one of the times. Nope, MUDDY RIVER NIGHTMARE BAND has put out a 7" EP that parodies the cover of the *Too Fast for Love* record by MÖTLEY CRÜE, and thinks there is humor in it by calling it *Too Fat for Love*. Well kids there is humor in it, but the joke only works once and the ALL YOU CAN EAT/YOUR MOTHER split on Probe records did it. If that wasn't bad enough, the guy on the MUDDY RIVER NIGHTMARE BAND cover isn't nearly as fat as the guy on the cover of the original parody. Oh, and that guy on *that* cover happened to be this reviewer. I hate unoriginal hacks. In regards to this band's messy, melodic punk, the best I can say about it is that it might be better then aforementioned split. Jeff likes the way the singer can't hold a note. Better luck next time boys and hey, maybe you can parody SLAYER or AC/DC next. (JF)
(www.mrnb.net)

NAZ NOMAD & THE NIGHMARES – "Music from *Give Daddy the Knife Cindy*" LP

Ah, those heady days of the mid-80s-60s! For those who don't recall this Dave Vanian and friends (maybe even some other DAMNED members of one era or another—pundits disagree) goof, it's an enjoyable bunch of (fairly obvious) covers with a couple of decent originals ("Just Call Me Sky" always being good for a chuckle back in the day) and that classic mid-80s production. (DD)
(Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank, CA 91507, www.dionysusrecords.com)

NEVER AGAIN – "Blow Off" EP

This urgent four-song EP offers HC with blaring guitars and song structures that somehow recalls the punky Boston HC sound of '84. NEVER AGAIN, however, hails from Japan, and the combination of tasteful lead guitar breaks, screamed vocals, and decent speed allow for standouts like the title track. Typically great Japanese production—understated and raw, yet powerful. Recommended. (SS)
(Drinker's Music)

NEW BREED – "Off the Beaten Path" CD

Straight-up punk from the mean streets of Halifax, Nova Scotia. Very much influenced by the DROPKICK MURPHYS and newer American streetpunk, as well as older British bands like the BUSINESS. Decent lyrics against the war and the man. They keep the tempo up (which is always good when dealing with streetpunk) and overall I'd have to give this a thumbs up, which is impressive given that they'd already started off at a disadvantage in my mind because of the awful name. (AD)
(Thorp, PO Box 6786, Toledo, OH 43612)

ORDER OF THE VULTURE – "Christ Killer" EP

Fuck, this rules. Totally evil, Christ-hating, blackened crust-metal from Portland, walking a perfect balance between styles—like if VENOM and CELTIC FROST started jamming with the rhythm section of TRAGEDY. Everything about this is dead on, from the great lyrics and layout, to the particularly venomous vocals, to the solid fast riffing and drumming. Fans of everything from black metal to crust will find something to love. And I love the drummer's moniker of "Bloody Rich." Get it? Get this. (EL)
(Mortville, www.mortvillerecords.com)

OFF MINOR – "Innominate" LP

OFF MINOR plays jazzy, discordant rock music in odd time signatures. They alternate between clean and distorted guitar, and speaking and screaming. They are a cut above of a lot of bands that play this style of rock, which is also done well by bands like SAETIA (who I believe was pre-OFF MINOR) and TWELVE HOUR TURN. (WR)
(Golden Brown, PO Box 8402, Philadelphia, PA 19101, www.goldenbrownrecordings.com)

ORPHANS – "Raise the Youth" CD

Unfortunately not the fab femme- fronted ORPHANS from LA, but rather a discography of the last ten years of a bunch of kids (literally) from the East Coast. It all comes across a little flat, like they have a mishmash of influences but no real direction. I'm hearing the ANGRY SAMOANS, PROPAGHANDI, SUBHUMANS, CITIZEN FISH, and even the old band the LIBIDO BOYS. (TB)
(Fistolo, PO Box 2836, Upper Darby, PA 19082)

THE PATSYS – "In and Out with You / Teenage Kicks"

Fuckin' A. This is fucking cool. It's kinda punky, kinda poppy and it's got great female vocals. The A-side is a kind of slower, steady, catchy number. I think its big draw for me is that the chorus makes me bounce my head. And the B-side is a cover of the UNDERTONES classic. I like it, but I have to admit that it could be simply because it's a great song done with a female at the mic. Otherwise, it's pretty true to the original. Highly recommended. (KK)
(Umbrella, 2410 Summit St, Columbus, OH, 43202, umbrellarecords@hotmail.com)

PICTURE FRAME SEDUCTION – "The Hand of the Rider" LP

Reissue of an album from 1984, PICTURE FRAME SEDUCTION hailed from Wales (…or was it England?) and played straight up punk with a pre-hardcore UK sound. I can't remember ever hearing about them back-in-the-day. The record comes without lyrics (or a cover even) so I don't know what they're on about. It's all pretty average, and that's being kind. (AD)
(www.interpunk.com)

PLAN OF ATTACK – "The Working Dead" CD

Political hardcore influenced by all the old legends. Clean sounding production, a smattering of breakdowns, and enough parts for floor punching, stage dives, and pile on scramble for the mic. Pretty standard lyrics about being pissed and fed up with people and society. The RED C cover wasn't bad but DCHC doesn't benefit from clean production and tight guitars. Not a bad listen, but I would have enjoyed a four-track 7" much more then an 18-track CD as an introduction to this band. (NT)
(Organized Crime, PO Box 213, Brookfield, IL 60513)

PRESTO? – "Atentado Sonoro" CD

35 songs in 28 minutes of scorching Brazilian grindcore. Really high-intensity delivery here, with great speed and super-heavy breakdowns. The vocals are occasionally a detraction when they're a bit too much like shouted tough-guy, almost rap-metal vocals, but this could just be due to odd Portuguese inflection. The band manages enough relentless speed to keep things interesting, and the drummer is very much on point throughout. Their (uncredited) sped-up version of SEPULTURA's "Arise" is awesome. Really, the more I listen to this, the more it floors me. (EL)
(Peculio Discos, Caixa Postal #393, Santos - SP, 11001-970, BRAZIL, www.peculiodiscos.com.br)

THE PROWL – "The First Room on the Left" EP

I can't help but wonder if ever since this band stirred up a little controversy (most of it over-exaggerated) for their first EP cover, they've purposely revisited the whole slasher-flick theme for each sequential record to continue to piss people off. Well, it's gone way past offensive and into the realm of boring. Luckily, their music more than makes up for the unoriginality of their artwork. This record is fucking good. Haunting guitar riffs and garage rock-like production make it a winner. Combining the early beginnings of LA's Death Rock scene, with a touch of ADOLESCENTS and a little TALES OF TERROR, this four-song EP should've made my top ten in this month's column. (CC)
(www.painkillerrecords.com)

Q65 – "I Despise You / Ann"

Fans of great 60s Nederbeat scene have enjoyed a banner year for reissues. First, the (Dutch) OUTSIDERS got a proper CD singles collection, then four (so far) of their absolutely stellar singles were reissued with original artwork and great sound. That same treatment has now been given to Holland's second best 60s garage punk band, Q65. "I Despise You," the A-side, is the standout track on this single; fans of the PRETTY THINGS (and of course, the OUTSIDERS) will hear similarities between this song and some of the early PRETTIES' most fuzzed out, venomous tracks. The B–side features a lilting folk ballad that stands up their with other greats from Nederbeat's softer side. An absolute must for newbies and long time fans alike—the exact repro of the picture sleeve is a nice bonus. (GN)
(Decoy)

QUANTICE NEVER CRASHED – "The Physical Setting of a Dream" CD

Metallic hardcore with lots jerky time changes and riffage galore. They play the mix of metal and screamo off each other very well. And the harsh, choppy vocals work well within the context of the music. Not too shabby at all. (RC)
(The Death Scene, 8642 Bay Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11214, www.thedeathscene.com)

RED SATYRS – "A Little Too Quiet…" CD

Red Satyrs are butterflies native to the southwest United States and Mexico. The RED SATYRS are a garage rock 'n' roll band out of Minneapolis. Sleazy thump-thump, fuzzy but not fuzzed out, somewhere between lo-fi and hi-fi, almost an old Estrus Records sound but a bit tougher. Songs about "Bourbon," "White Lightning," "Tequila Gutpunch," and drinking too much then drinking some more. Not as bad or as good as all of the above would lead you to believe. This thing has some moments but is a bit mediocre if you ask me. They're probably a fun live experience though. Anyone this awash in booze should be making music a bit more dangerous and ah…boozy. (RR)
(www.redsatyrs.com)

REJECTED YOUTH – "No Police State Coalition" EP

I'm always waiting for a great sing-along street-punk band with political/anti-state ideas rather than the typical lyrics about going down the pub (not that that's necessarily a bad thing). REJECTED YOUTH from Germany have that early BUSINESS/4 SKINS rousing chorus thud-punk appeal, but throw in some smart well thought out lyrics for a change. I was particularly enamored by the rousing chorus of "fuck, fuck, fuck the police." (TB)
(Twisted Chords, Reutweg 1a, 76327 Pfinztal, GERMANY)

ROSEVALLEY PUNKROCKERS – "R&B = Kutmuziek" CD

Shite "comedy" punk like later PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES. Dumb schoolboy humor with songs about licking bums and drinking. Nien Danke. (TB)
(Tocado)

THE ROTTEN – "Circus of the Demented" CD

Am I like the sole *MRR* reviewer for Canada? 1977-type punk from Ontario, two girls and one guy in the band. The guy sings, and they remind of the SEX PISTOLS and FEAR and that sort of thing. It sounds pretty dated and generic but a lot of people seem to like that kind of thing these days. (AD)
(www.therotten.cjb.net)

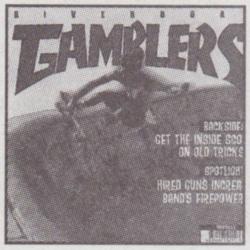
ROUSE – "Deep Inside" 12"

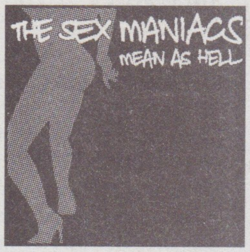
Sixteen tracks from an old side project by the same members of the legendary HHH from Spain. Instrument-wise, this sounds pretty similar to HHH with the exception that the recording quality is better. The vocals however, are very melodic in a 7 SECONDS sort of way. If you're a fan of either of these bands, then I highly recommend picking this up. Comes with cool looking poster. (CC)
(Shortfuse, BM Active WC1N, 3XX London, UK)

SADDEST LANDSCAPE – "Lift Your Burdens…" LP

North Eastern kids prove that crying on the floor is more than just a fad as they deliver seven songs of spastic emotional hardcore that brings to mind bands like SAETIA and FRAIL, packaged in a very nice hand-screened tear-proof (*really, someone needs to patent that!*) cardboard sleeve. For those of you familiar with the band, only four of these songs are new, the other three coming from the *Cover Your Heart* EP. This *is* a really good record. I don't want my cynicism to get in the way of that, but is it too much to ask to go one month without listening to something that has a drawing of a heart on it? (VH)
(Alone, PO Box 3019, Oswego, NY 13126, www.alonerecords.com)

PATIENTZERO





SAINT BUSHMILL'S CHOIR– LP

Do I detect a slight hint of racial stereotyping at the ol' *MRR* offices? I must have a word with those upstairs. Anyways, what we have here's a band off old school crusties, comprised of former members off the GITS, SUBVERT, and the PINKOS dabbling in the ever-dodgy waters of punked-up Irish folk. Like many, I hold the POGUES in very high regard, and I never fail to be amused by bands like FLOGGING MOLLY, who can only manage to pull off a meager imitation. It's hard to remain objective in reviewing this genre, as I grew up in an atmosphere where traditional Irish music, such as PLANXTY, STOCKTONS WING, and the CHIEFTAINS were held in such high regard. In other words, when it comes to the best drinking music in the whole goddamned world, I'm unfortunately a purist. If you like your jigs and reels injected with some punk rock flava, then I guess you'll be digging this. By the way, fuck Bushmill's and its proven record of discriminating against Catholics, stick to the Jameson's, punk rockers. (SD)

(Profane Existence, PO Box 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408, www.profaneexistence.com)

SAMHAIN – "Final Descent" LP

If my memory serves me correctly this is collection of some unreleased demo stuff from the mid-late 80s. On the first few songs they have a drum machine handling the beats, and on the last few tracks they have a live drummer. But one thing remains consistent…this pretty much sucks. You know, I never have been a huge SAMHAIN fan and this release clearly highlights his move over towards his DANZIG sound. More cock rock than punk and venom. No thanks! (RC)

(no address)

SAYYADINA – "Fear Gave Us Wings" CD

Mother of god—this is about as good as it gets in the grind world. I have been a huge fan of this band since the first second of the "Dune" intro on their split with BRUCE BANNER a couple years back. Somehow managing to raise the bar for the genre as a whole in terms of pure speed, intensity and song writing, SAYYADINA are in danger of passing NASUM as the best grindcore band in Sweden, and therefore the world. Not that it's a competition, but seriously, these guys put 99% of the bands out that to shame, and make me at least never want to pick up a pair of drum sticks again. It's a bit of a shame that their original drummer Ove (one of the absolute fastest drummers ever) is no longer hitting the skins, but he's still in the band, now as a third singer, and his replacement, Adde from fellow Swedish grinders BIRDFLESH more than adequately takes the reins behind the kit. Their guitarist also played in legendary crust outfit ACURSED, as well as RETALIATION, and Ove also sings for I QUIT!, so I guess it's a small world over there in Sweden. Needless to say, this is making me re-think my previous "album of the year" proclamations and will undoubtedly go down as a milestone in the grind canon. (EL)

(Sound Pollution, PO Box 17742, Covington, KY 41017, www.sound-pollution.com)

SCRAPY – "Unsteady Times" CD

A lefty (as in politics, not as in the way Jimi Hendrix played his guitar) "streetska" (their definition, not mine) band. Very accomplished. Very smooth. Think *Out Come the Wolves*-era RANCID, mixed with the ska and dancehall stylings of the MAD CADDIES. This is very impressive, actually, and their lyrics are a cut above the typical "street" bollocks too. (RK)

(Mad Butcher, www.madbutcher.de)

SEE YOU IN HELL – "Umet Se Prodat" LP

Czech Republic's SEE YOU IN HELL deliver the goods on this their first full length LP. Eleven blasts of raw hardcore punk with a slight driving modern Scandinavian feel to it—riff heavy guitars, thundering rampaging bull drums, thick production with snarly vocals. There's a strong anarcho and anti-war sentiment to the lyrics as well. Overall a totally solid LP from this band that seems to be too overlooked—maybe if they were from Sweden, some of you might be more inclined to check them out, cause they are worth it. (MT)

(Insane Society, PO Box 18, 504 01 Novy Bydzov, CZECH REPUBLIC, www.insanesociety.net)

SEX MANIACS – "Mean as Hell" CD

Mean as hell they are, and pleasant listening if you're suitably pissed off (or on). The SEX MANIACS offer a lucky 12 tracks of hairy-palmed rock 'n' roll that bears a resemblance to the CANDY SNATCHERS, or WEAKLINGS, or the HUMPERS when they were still good—maybe they all shared a police line-up during kindergarten. Lyrically it's the usual I-hate-you-but-call-me songbook: "Illegal Libido," "Conjugal Blues," "Gimme Nothing," "Time to Rock," and "Broken Down Clown" are examples. Liked it. (JH)

(Manic Ride, PO Box 42593, Philadelphia, PA 19101, www.manicriderecords.com)

SHAMS – "Be Coming Home / Time You Wasted"

"Be Coming Home" is a highly ROLLING STONES-ish (think "Heart of Stone") tale of heartbreak and separation anxiety, spoken from the spleen and delivered with more conviction than it probably requires. "Be coming home, baby…be coming home." It's a fairly mellow spin around the turntable, and didn't inspire a repeat listen (will it, ever?). "Time You Wasted," on the other mitt, is shrieky and shouty garage with high frequencies in the glass-breaking range. Generic, but generic in a *good,* ear-popping way. Listen to this single in reverse order. (JH)

(Shake It, 4156 Hamilton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45223, www.shakeitrecords.com)

SICK OF IT ALL – "Outtakes for the Outcast" CD

SICK OF IT ALL will always have a home on my turntable. For a band pushing 20 years, they have pretty much stuck to their guns throughout the many, many phases of hardcore. I interviewed this band when I was sixteen years old right after *Scratch the Surface* came out, and Lou announced to me that he had just turned 30. I remember thinking to myself "Holy shit this band is old. They might have one album left in them…if they're lucky." Fast forward eleven years, and SICK OF IT ALL are still playing great shows, putting out solid, true-to-form hardcore, and outlasting almost every single one my friends that introduced me to this band. *Outtakes for the Outcast* isn't essential, but it is still very much worth picking up for its collection of B-sides, covers, and rarities spanning a wide variety of hardcore and punk genres. Stand out tracks include their covers of SHAM 69, HÜSKER DÜ, and STRAIGHT AHEAD. The HOUSE OF PAIN remix of "Just Look Around" was a valiant attempt at recreating the rap/hardcore hybrid (and is worth a listen), but it doesn't come close to the PUBLIC ENEMY/ANTHRAX collaboration that probably inspired it. It's interesting to see a band like this come back full circle to an independent label. Great band, great CD. (CC)

(Fat Wreck, PO Box 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119-3690)

SMALLTOWN – "The Music" CD

I don't mean to sound like a jaded old twat, but even though there are a bunch of records that are fantastic every month, there are only a few that make the hairs stand up on the back of your neck and make you feel like a kid again. This band is the best band of the past decade, no competition. Total hook-laden punk tunes dripping with emotion and energy. Taking the best parts of the STIFF LITTLE FINGERS, NEWTOWN NEUROTICS and the CHORDS, and adding their own infectious songwriting into the mix. This band will be up there in years to come as one of the classics of our time… this LP (like all their stuff) is *that* good. If you only buy one disc this year, get this. If I had the money I'd fly them out to play these songs in my bedroom. I need to go and take a few deep breaths, as I'm speechless. (TB)

(Deranged, www.derangedrecords.com)

SMART ASS DYNAMITE & THE NEW GENERATION OF DESTRUCTIVE ENTERTAINMENT – "Positive Nihilism" LP

This sounds like the DEAD KENNEDYS brought up to date with some REFUSED technical hardcore, DEVO quirkiness, and occasional horns. Actually, it sounds a lot like LARD. Pretty wacky stuff, and the packaging is pretty wild as well. It makes sense that they're German. Actually, my comparison above sounds pretty dismissive but they should be commended for trying something different and new, while remaining extremely listenable. (AM)

(The Company With The Golden Arm, www.tcwtga.org)

THEE SNUFF PROJECT – "Dyin' Ain't Much of a Livin'" CD

From DC, not the city I'd normally associate with this stuff. Maybe this is what happens when HOOVER fans lose the edge. Raucous, damaged, blown-out 60s-influenced garage that could be on In The Red or something. Fuzz, wah-wah, tambourine, alcohol, sex, and drug references all intact. Not really my thing, but loose enough to be entertaining. I bet this would be a lot more fun at a party with a bottle of Beam. Not that I've ever drunk Beam, but this record makes me want to. Are they playing at any parties soon? (AM)

(Hackshop, PO Box 21061, Washington DC 20009, www.hackshoprecords.com)

SOD – "Lagar Och Forordningar" EP

Fans of the rawest possible Scandinavian HC will enjoy this clutch of demo tracks recorded in 1983. Sound quality varies from song to song, but inim-

itable tunes like "Church Want Power" and "Dator" show the band at their familiar best—steamroller HC with growled vocals and songs so fast that the instruments practically overtake each other. This semi-authorized release may have problems with consistency, but the best material shows why SOD were to become so influential. (SS)
(no address)

SON OF THE MOURNING – "Forest Bank" CD

Spastic metalcore that calls to mind POISON THE WELL. Unfortunately, they also incorporate all of these melodic parts with quiet passages and sung vocals. As I always say, give me the hard stuff or give me nothing. And leave the weepy passionate stuff for all the other garbage emo bands out there. (RC)
(Engineer, 1 Chandos Rd., Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN1 2NY, UNITED KINGDOM, www.engineerrecords.com)

SPEND 4 – "Starting Over" EP

Six tracks of raw rock'n'roll-infused hardcore punk that brings to mind fellow Japanese punx SMASH YOUR FACE. SPEND 4 plays high-energy, riff-heavy punk rock that grabs you by the throat and shakes you. Just go, go, go!! (MT)
(Acme, www.acmerecords.bizland.com)

SPITS – "19 Million A.C." CD

Over the last few years the SPITS have been making a name for themselves with their style of dirty keyboard-driven 80s punk. This 19-track, 43-minute, CD is their *19 Million A.C.* EP along with a few songs off of the Slovenly and Dirtnap LPs, a cover of G.G. ALLIN's "Drink, Fight & Fuck," and a handful of others that are sure to send you into epileptic fits of synth-punk bliss. (VH)
(Dirtnap, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

STAGE BOTTLES – "We Need a New Flag" CD

I thought these guys broke up a few years back. It's nice to see they're still out there. Vehemently anti-fascist skinheads from Germany play Euro-oi with horns and reggae mixed in. I don't know if they reformed or what, but their sound has really come along. The ska/reggae is downplayed and this is actually really good punk with a nice upbeat tempo, good vocals, and nice production. I've always liked this band, but I must admit more so for their stance than their music. This is the record I've been waiting for them to make. (AD)
(Insurgence, 2 Bloor St. W. Suite100-184, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3E2, CANADA)

THE STILETTOS – "Making History by Repeating It" CD

Really can't say anything good or bad about this. Thirteen tracks of catchy, poppy, rock 'n' roll with a faint, ever-so-slight thrashy feel. Lots of (maybe tongue in cheek—but you never know with Euros) rock and roll clichés. I don't know, if you like Stardumb records releases, punk rock light, I imagine you will like this. They seem like nice enough guys, and the photo of them with the babies is sooooooooo cute! (RR)
(Stardumb, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, NETHERLANDS)

STILLICIDIO –LP

Wow, I am totally perplexed. What is this record called? This band is from Italy and shout some totally-over-the-top growled crust that is by my best account unintelligible, and since I can't read Italian I am kind of at a loss. The music is pretty good though, kind of reminds me of ABC DIABLO or a rawer COUNTERBLAST, but the vocals are too much for my tastes. This is for fans of noisier, metallic, epic side of crust. This record is accompanies by a huge booklet with some really great art and a whole lot of words—wish I knew what they said. (WK)
(Masnada c/o Cristiano, Vaglierli C.P. 646, 30100 Venezia, ITALY)

S.T.R.E.E.T.S – "Worms" LP

Not bad for a bunch of Pabst Blue Ribbon-swillin' hipsters from Canada. After seeing this band interviewed in magazines like *Vice* and *Thrasher*, I wasn't expecting this to be as good as it is. Once you get past the trucker hats and brown work pants, you'll have your ass handed to you with some serious fucking skate thrash. I am not sure what S.T.R.E.E.T.S is an acronym for (*Skating Totally Rules, Eveything Else Totally Sucks—duh Carl. —Mike Thorn)*, but with song titles like "Freebird to Revert" and "Let's Get Rad," you can bet it most definitely involves skating. Take the good fast parts of SUICIDAL TENDENCIES' *Lights, Camera, Revolution*, add some IRON MAIDEN riffs, and then throw in the whole hipster 70s rock vibe, and then you might just be able to handle what the S.T.R.E.E.T.S are trying to ram down your skull. I imagine this band would fit perfectly on the bill with ANNIHILATION TIME (although I doubt they have ever heard of them). I could totally see both of these bands hanging out after the show, finding common ground in their undying love for all things THIN LIZZY. A fitting soundtrack for getting drunk and skating ramps while even drunker Joan Jett-looking girls watch in awe and tap their pointy-toed shoes to the beat. (CC)
(Hit the Deck, 1531 23rd Ave. NW, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA, TZM 1VS)

STRUNG OUT – "Exile In Oblivion" LP

What the hell is this… this… uh…you have to be kidding me! *This* is what STRUNG OUT sounds like?! Squeaky clean, boring, limp, unthreatening MTV-friendly garbage. Sterile well played modern "punk" yuckiness. Yawn. Puke. Fart. The soundtrack to thousands of clean-cut teenagers doing whatever it is that bland stale clean-cut teenagers do—whatever it is it certainly has nothing to do with punk. Seriously, you've got to be kidding me. (MT)
(Fat)

SUPERHERO – "Picking Up the Line" CD

Anthemic, melodic hardcore with some emo stylings guitar-wise and passionate vocals and lyrics. SUPERHERO is a bit like DILLINGER FOUR and a bit like the DOUGHBOYS. There's a bit of a brotherhood theme going on here too. I'm down with this strong release. (RL)
(Redemption)

SUPERSONICOS / ROCK- A-HULAS – split CD

More of that mystifying South American garage wave, where are all these records coming from? I mean, what's inspiring them, is the CIA pumping up the deficit by sending them all the complete back catalogs of the SONICS, MUMMIES and CYNICS? Both of these bands are rock-solid garage bands of the mid-90s variety, good chops and the right attitudes that give you the same end product that the Italian garage wave does. The ROCK-A-HULAS are the mouthy garage punks, the SUPERSONICOS are surfing slick and light (which is the way to play surf, like in an operating theater). Chocolate and peanut butter. (RW)
(Rastrillo, CC 71– B1852ELU Buenos Aires, ARGENTINA)

SUSPECT DEVICE – "A Moment's Notice" CD

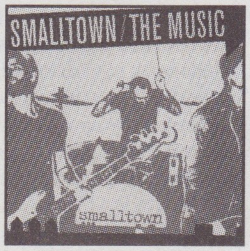
Good solid punk rock with a street edge from Boston or thereabouts. Sounds very much like the DROPKICK MURPHYS without the bagpipes. This pretty much picks up where the last album from three or four years ago left off. Some of the songs are really well written—anthems if you will—and the final track "Road to Armageddon" is a belter. (AD)
(www.suspectdevice.net)

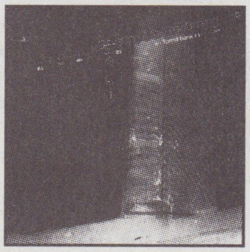
SWEET J.A.P. – "I'm Only Moonlight / No Go"

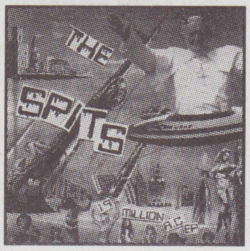
Brings back memories a) TEENGENERATE, b) REGISTRATORS, c) HAVE NOTS, d) all of the above. SWEET J.A.P. are a Japanese group who share the same atavistic energy as the previously mentioned bands, and manage to squeeze an aural brain

The ShakeDowns

Sick of It All
Outtakes for the Outcast







attack into about four minutes worth of pressed vinyl. "I'm Only Moonlight" is tough and speedy, while "No Go" swaggers and shoves. A little short, but it's only a *single.* (JH)

(Dirtnap, PO Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111, www.dirtnaprecs.com)

SWEETBELLYS – "You Won't Like Me When I'm Angry" EP

The SWEETBELLYS, from Scotland, start off fine on this EP with some straightforward hardcore tunes that bring to mind *Hear Nothing*-era DISCHARGE, as well as more melodic Brit punk bands. The mix is kind of quiet, but otherwise the first three songs are decent. Then, for some reason, on side two is a *long* song called "They Will Rob You," which, much to my horror, was played to the tune of "We Will Rock You." It goes on *forever*, and it is really, really bad. This song alone turned this from a decent record to one that practically scarred me for life. Word to the wise: novelty songs are not funny. (GN)

(Peter Bower, PO BOX 132, Leeds, LS6 2RR, UNITED KINGDOM, peterbower@alcoholic.co.uk)

TE XAS THIEVES – "Killer on Craigslist" EP

Straight-forward punk that reminds me of DI. The title-track is a catchy ditty that's been getting play on local college stations, and the flip has two tracks that speed things up a little while retaining the old-school flavor. Pretty good. (AD)

(Super Speedway, 108 Paseo De San Antonio, San Jose, CA 95113)

THEMA ELEVEN – "Choose Your Beast" LP

Didn't these guys put an album out on Ebullition ten years ago? Well no, But the kids would have loved it if they had. Coming at us from the Czech Republic, THEMA ELEVEN pound out six songs of mid-tempo melodic hardcore that takes you back to the days when "emo" wasn't a dirty word. (VH)

(Malarie, Vidce 300, 756 27 Valasska Bysrice, CZECH REPUBLIC, http://malarie.ind.cz)

THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB – "Three Way Tie for a Fifth" CD

I've no idea whether this is the first effort from this Florida trio, but I've a sneaking suspicion that its not. I saw 'em once live, and they were a huge hit with the kind of punkers that take Crimethinc as their bible, and think the best date ever involves making out in a dumpster. They've taken that shouty, semi-acoustic AGAINST ME! sound, and really gone with it. I'm sure they consider themselves folk troubadours, though you'd be better off sticking with PHIL OCHS. Actually, the harmonica adds a nice touch, but there's just too much grubbage for my liking. (RK)

(Plan-it-X, 5810 West Willis Rd, Georgetown, IN 47122)

TOMORROW – "Chiedi Troppo" LP

Oh yeah! How about some fast and energetic hook-filled Japanese thrash with the vocals screamed in Italian. 18 songs, limited gray vinyl…you know this is a must have. TOMORROW came over this past summer and both times I saw them they played with a reckless aggression that is rarely matched these days. Especially their super-hyper singer. I seem to remember hearing that they broke up. And if that is the case, then this is an excellent note to end on. (RC)

(Answer, Hase Bld. No.2 B1 5-49, Osu 3 naka-Ku, Nagoya-City, Aichi 460, JAPAN)

TOXIC NARCOTIC – "Shoot People, Not Dope" EP

Fuck yes! These Boston, Massachusetts punk stalwarts have delivered another high quality hardcore slab of brute noise! As one of the longest running punk outfits in the Northeast, these cretins have earned a lot of respect in the punk community. TOXIC NARCOTIC is still pissed off! Listen to "Only the Wrong Survive," "People Want to Kill Each Other," and "Dig Your Own Pit." Fucking true punk rock for the masses! After all these years in the punk trenches, TOXIC NARCOTIC has not lost a step! *Shoot People, Not Dope*, still has the anger bristling right on top! Get TOXIC NARCOTIC's newest installment in their legacy of thrash! (BR)

(Rodent Popsicle, PO Box 1143, Allston, MA 02134, www.rodentpopsicle.com)

TROUBLE EVERYDAY – "Days Vs. Nights" CD

Catchy, anthemic guitar pop here. The singer sounds a bit like the guy from the RAPTURE and there are tinges of U2 in the guitars here and there. TROUBLE EVERYDAY is extremely derivative, but I wouldn't be surprised if they didn't get pretty big on the coattails of FRANZ FERDINAND, etc. Frankly, although this stuff gets your toe tapping, it's really not much more than aural wallpaper, destined to be little more than the soundtrack to the teen angst on *The O.C.* or to a shopping trip to Urban Outfitters. Check out the sale rack, I think I saw some neat-o mesh trucker hats there. (AM)

(Turnstile, www.turnstilelabel.com)

TRUE IF DESTROYED – LP

TRUE IF DESTROYED is female-fronted, DC-influenced, emo-esque punk from Philadelphia. The singer has a good voice and the music is well played. People are referencing SOULSIDE and RITES OF SPRING, but I'd go with the DISCOUNT comparisons more. (AD)

(www.franklin-records.com)

THE ULCERS – "Hot Skin & Cold Cash" LP

One song into it and it's already on my top ten list. Wow. This is excellent. It's like somebody found a time machine and went back to 1977. The ULCERS are an amazing cross between early UK melodic punk and some of the LA Dangerhouse bands. They're mid-tempo, catchy, a little fuzzy—they're great. Having made the 1977 comment, I have to tell you that this isn't just some copycat, they-might-as-well-be-a-cover band; they've got their own "sound." Highest recommendation. (KK)

(Damaged Goods, PO Box 45854, London, E11 1YX, UNITED KINGDOM, www.damagedgoods.co.uk)

ÜMLAUT – "Total Disfuckingcography" CD

Fuck, how to give this a proper review...words simply cannot describe just how intense this "Finnish" band is. I won't tell you if you don't know who this really is, but it's not hard to figure out—basically it's them gone total fucking grind under the guise of being a Finnish biker band, and Holy Christ the results are just devastating. The drumming on this is fucking maniacal—some of the most punishing use of double kick in a hardcore setting ever. The usual lyrics and manifestos appear inside and they're just as moving as ever, but tempered with this are dozens of the wittiest insider jokes ever released under one banner. I'm just gonna say that the song "Hikken" is one of the most brilliant songs ever released in hardcore—"read along" in the booklet to find out why. The S.O.D. tribute "Denied at Customs" (sung to the tune of "United Forces"), the mosh-to-end-all-moshes "Finland Uber Alles," the BETTE MIDLER and CARCASS "covers," the six full songs that chalk in under the five-second mark, the excessive use of umlauts on every "u" in sight—arrghh...this is brilliance beyond compare. Contained herein are the *Havoc Wreakers* 12" and the *Finland* 6" compiled into a nice, thick booklet with new layout and pics. For Finland's sake, get this! (EL)

(CrimethInc, PO Box 2133, Greensboro, NC 27402)

UNIFORM APPROACH – "A Pledge to the Edge" EP

This is England's answer to STRAIGHT YOUTH and GRUDGE. Contains the singer, drummer, and guitarist from HERESY and RIPCORD pumping out some great solid straight edge hardcore. Joke? Probably. But who knows since these guys were *way* straight edge when they wrote this. This was originally just released as a demo in 1989, and my liner notes have the old *MRR* review in it to prove it. 15 years later this demo gets the vinyl treatment and another review (this time without the lazy, half-assed sarcasm). Who knew? (CC)

(Shortfuse, BM Active WC1N, 3XX London, UNITED KINGDOM

UNNATURAL AXE – "Is Gonna Kick Your Ass" LP

….nice sounding comp of old material by these long-gone Boston punk legends!!!!! I was never a fan of their "They Saved Hitler's Brain" hit that all the *Killed by Death* nerds spend top dollar for…but I'll have to say that the rest of their tunes are dynamite!!!!! Old Boston punk FUCKING RULES!!!!!! No doubt about it!!!! Maybe it's something in their "dirty water"!!!! Smell my fingers, they've been in my ass!!!(SW)

(Alternative Action, PO Box 174, 11101 Riihimaki, FINLAND, jukka.sateri@aar.inet.fi)

UNTIL THE END – "The Blind Leading the Lost" CD

Anyone else weirded out by the resurgence of early 90s hardcore trends? Epic screamo, and then bands like this—thick moshy hardcore that reminds me of DESPAIR or Clevo heroes CONFRONT. Throaty vocals, super chugga guitars, and that all important China cymbal—I can just see throngs of bald X'd up dudes in hooded sweatshirts beating the crap out of each other, going totally apeshit while clamoring over each other in an attempt to sing-a-long. Thankfully there are enough straightforward bits to keep it from being mired down in mundane E-chug mosh—plus bonus points for intelligent lyrics condemning blind patriotic bullshit, the empty nature of the so-called American Dream, and the War On Terror. Now *Mosh!!!* (MT)

(Eulogy, www.eulogyrecords.com)

USELESS WOODEN TOYS – "Something Must Change" EP

The packaging of this EP is a real head-scratcher; everything is hand-done in a way that must've taken a lot of time, but the end result still lacks regard for aesthetic value. Furthermore, this EP is evidently #21 of 50, which, along with the recording quality, makes it seem more like a demo than a true release. The music itself is fast-paced, dual-vocaled, crusty hardcore in the EXTREME NOISE TERROR vein, though USELESS WOODEN TOYS has quite a ways to go to reach the heights of that band. This would've made a good demo, but as it is, the 50 copies of this record will probably be a nice memento for band members and friends alike. (GN)

(DYI, 1824 Elliot Ave S Apt #2, Minneapolis, MN 55404, donenothing@beer.com)

VEX – "New Words For an Old Revolution" EP

'Nother early 80s hardcore demo crawls out of the wreckage of that generally fucked decade. Thump-thump-fuzz that oozes that intoxicating local-specific sincerity and a strong desire to be a legit successor to the first wave of TX bands. Damn good songs that remind me of TOXIC REASONS. They were gunnin' after Reagan, but "We've Got A Bigger Problem Now." (RW)

(Hotbox Review)

VIVA LA FOXX / PEARLENE – split EP

I wasn't quite sure what to expect from the VIVA LA FOXX side of this split EP, as its splattered with pictures of nude women in various suggestive poses—one is getting spanked by another lady, one is sitting in car (waiting for you to join her, from the looks of it), one is offering you a slice of pie (you know what *that* means!), and one is getting it on…with some vinyl records! I was pleasantly surprised to find that this band is actually comprised of some women—the cover art could've easily been the work of some immature male jokesters. Anyway, the music itself is also raw and sexually charged, but its slower-than-usual pace and sometimes irregular rhythms make it sound pretty much exactly like PUSSYCAT TRASH or some other Slaampt records band, which is a good thing in my book. On the flipside we have PEARLENE, who shares a guitar player with VIVA LA FOXX. Their first song, a slow and really legit sounding blues number, is a real winner. On the second song, they punkify things a bit, but this actually makes them sound more timid and normal than when they are playing eerie, lo-fi blues. Overall, a good split. (GN)

(Shake It, 4156 Hamilton Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45223, www.shakeitrecords.com)

THE WARRIORS – "War is Hell" CD

I really, *really* wish tough guy metal posing as hardcore punk would fucking die already. I mean, I lived through the 90s and I would think that people would have realized by now how absolutely unlistenable this stuff is. I do have to say that the WARRIORS' metaphor-heavy lyrics are a touch better than the average fair in this genre, but considering their peers and forerunners, that's not saying much. Unfortunately, this breakdown-heavy, chugga chugga, HATEBREED-wannabe bullshit is exactly the reason that, years later, I'd *still* rather call myself punk than hardcore any day. (GN)

(Eulogy)

WARRIOR KIDS – "Les Wieux Kows" CD

Longtime French punkers WARRIOR KIDS release a new album—near as I can tell their first since 1986. Big, anthemic, loud driving guitars showing a clear early CLASH influence blended with bits of dub, pop and ska for a volatile late 70s UK style punk brew. Its certainly cleaner and more polished than their prior releases, but the formula is fundamentally the same. Fans of recent French heroes LA FRACTION would certainly be into the more straightforward moments of this. Cool release. (MT)

(Astrologi, 67 Rue D'Aubagne, 13001 Marseille, FRANCE)

THE WEDNESDAYS – "Liberty" EP

The first song has a rockin' groove and an even mix, but the remaining three tunes seem to be a backdrop for the lead guitarist, who's having a blast. It's almost as if the guitarist keeps turning up in the mix, so he's pretty overpowering by the end of the EP. That's not necessarily bad. In fact, that scorching guitar helps put some serious bite into a rollickin' version of "Will the Circle be Unbroken." Good stuff. (HM)

(Perpetrator Records, PO Box 68-984,Newton, Auckland, NEW ZEALAND)

WELCOME THE PLAGUE YEAR – CD

Epic screamo that takes the monster sound of bands like ONE EYED GOD PROPHECY or URANUS and runs with it. Dramatic, sweeping guitars, paired with pained, screamed vocals spitting out indiscernible lyrics layered over music that builds and swells before coming crashing back down. Totally effective. (MT)

(Turnstile, www.turnstilelabel.com)

WIMPY DICKS – "Three Shades of Patriotism" CD

Fast pooka-pooka political punk rock that could have easily come out on Mystic in the mid-80s. WIMPY DICKS are probably a fun live band that brings the party. (MT)

(Bopp N' Skin, PO Box 14016, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406)

WIVES – "Erect the Youth Problem" LP

I know people who swear by this bands live show, comparing it to early BLACK FLAG. But having seen them myself, and now having listened to the record, I am very unimpressed. MILEMARKER covering BLACK FLAG with the positivity of Richard Simmons is a much more accurate description. Their emo-violence ballad "Wasted Again, Again" is anything but. Overall, it's not a bad record. What bugs me is that they're trying to be smart and play 80s hardcore at the same time, which is like trying to mix oil and vinegar. There's no edge or intensity to it. I just doesn't work. (VH)

(Cold Sweat, www.coldsweat.org)

WOLFMOTHER – CD

Four tracks of interminable metal thud and wallop with an acid-drenched black-light aesthetic—the cover seems wallpapered with a melted crayons, and the music captures all the joy and excitement of an extended Nyquil binge. Depressing, frustrating and precisely the opposite of what exciting rock 'n' roll was meant to be. (JH)

(Modular, PO Box 1666, Darlinghurst NSW 1300, AUSTRALIA, www.modularpeople.com)

THE WONKY MONKEES – "Singeries (To Ape Or Be Ape)" LP

…mediocre pop rock record with 50s and 60s influences… Not bad but not really great either!!! One song really stands out".. Monkey Soul" would have been a killer "A" side for a single… unfortunately the rest of it gets pretty dull. Great cover art though!!!!! Once again, no info… but I'm guessing these guys are French… If I'm wrong I'll French-kiss your baby sister's asshole…okay??!!!! (SW)

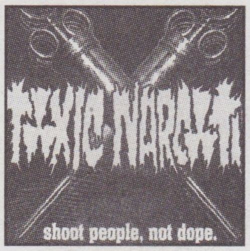
(Double Veheme, www.timetunnelrecords.com)

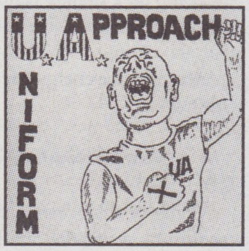
WORDS THAT BURN – "Profits of the Christ" EP

Here is the follow up to their LP, which also came out on Crimes Against Humanity. Basic crust with two contrasting vocalists (high and low pitched growls). Definitely reminded me of MISERY at times. Oh and they do a REMISSION cover (remember them?). (RC)

(Crimes Against Humanity, PO Box 1421, Eau Claire, WI 54702, www.cahrecords.com)

TEXAS THIEVES
KILLER ON CRAIGS LIST





VEX
New Words For An Old Revolution

THE YOUNG WEREWOLVES – "Evil Soul" CD

This is the "long awaited" debut of the YOUNG WEREWOLVES, and this CD is like a big Halloween extravaganza with songs only about mummies, zombies and, of course, werewolves. There's definitely a GROOVIE GHOULIES feel, with a cool scary cartoon cover and some pop punk, but these younguns focus more on rockabilly than pop punk. If you wait out the empty tracks at the end of the CD, you'll hear their hidden track that puts a twist to an old Billy Idol fave! (HM)
(www.theyoungwerewolves.com)

V/A – "Bottle of Smoke—Toronto Rock 'n' Roll Compilation" CD

Goody, a scene comp! Luv these, they mostly suck but as snapshots they can't be beat. Toronto seems to have loads of heavy-riff rawkers of the mid-80s Reckless Records variety, cut with some SUPERSUCKERS anthem-luvin' *chunk*. Toss in a couple of would-be-fast-for-1983 punk tracks and you've got yer average scene comp. I didn't feel any brain cells expand after listening to this, but that's cool, I can coast on what I already have. With modern technology it is possible to make very, *very* clean recordings and all of these bands have availed themselves of that. It's not my scene, but it's very alive and they are trying to entertain the godless youth of Canada. (RW)
(Rubber Factory)

V/A – "Dirty Half Dozen" CD

A six-way (duh) split CD. The only band with which I was familiar going into this review was PILGER, and their shouted vocals and fast-but-not-too-fast, 80s styled hardcore placed them as my easy favorites on the comp. HUMANS THE SIZE OF MICROPHONES started off on the right foot, with a crazed sound that at first reminded me of BLACK FLAG, RORSCHACH, or recent greats COLDSWEAT. They soon devolved, however, into epic, KAOSPILOT-styled hardcore, which nonetheless managed to retain my attention by avoiding boring, quiet parts and having some cool guitar work. CIRCUS ACT had one too many stop-and-start bits and annoying vocalists. DISOMA really grate on my nerves by playing mathy, noodly, quiet-then-loud-then-quiet again stuff with occasional screaming. INTENT end the comp on a slightly better note by playing straightforward, dual-vocalled punk rock, though I maintain that too many disjointed breakdowns and tempo-changes take the energy out of a good punk song. (GN)
(MilliePeed)

V/A – "Foot in Mouth Productions Comp 2: Ohio" CD

Comp of Ohio bands that span the entire sea of mediocrity, prompting me not to ask "Does the next band suck?" but "In which way will the next band suck?" ERIC WRONG & THE DO-RIGHTS have their moments, sounding something like NEW BOMB TURKS. KILL THE HIPPIES are weird enough to get me interested, and DON AUSTIN have some guts so this CD comp isn't a total waste of metal and plastic. But I'd still rather be listening to Neil Young singing "tin soldiers and Nixon coming, we're finally on our own. This summer I hear the drumming. four dead in Ohio." (WR)
(Foot In Mouth, 610 Phillip Avenue, Akron, Ohio 44305, www.geocities.com/fimpakron)

V/A – "The Horror Hive" CD

A sampler CD celebrating the five-year anniversary of the excellent Razorback Records, this is a great introduction to the label's full roster as well as several affiliated acts. Too many to mention (33 bands in all), but pretty much all groups fall under the death/grind description, usually with a healthy dose of humor and/or interest in horror or gore. Stand-outs include: ENGORGED, MACHETAZO, GHOUL, BIRDFLESH, FUCK...I'M DEAD, SPLATTERHOUSE, EMBALMING THEATRE, HAEMORRHAGE, GENERAL SURGERY, GORE BEYOND NECROPSY, and even a gore band from China called OPERATING TABLE. (EL)
(Razorback, PO Box 321, Farmingville, NY 11738, www.razorbackrecords.com)

V/A – "Noget Pa Dansk" EP

Worthy reissue of an old Danish comp, circa '85. The prolific (and probably most well known of the bunch) ENOLA GAY kick down a couple of sparse anarcho numbers that wouldn't sound out of place on the old Mortarhate comps. The WAR OF DESTRUCTION tune is an absolute ripper, a pinch of RUDIMENTARY PENI with some hardcore drive. On the flip LE CRAP are exactly that, artsy dirge like the B-side of *Let Them Eat Jellybeans* that you never listen to—y'know the OFFS or FLIPPER? VI redeem the side by carrying on where their tremendous *Triumph of Death* single left off, metallic hardcore with frantic vocals, not unlike a more over the top GENERIC. Exact repro of the foldout cover completes a great reissue. (TB)
(Alerta Antifascista)

V/A – "Non-Commercial Bullshit Detector" LP

You know nothing says brutality like the one-two combo of grindcore and tits—or maybe boring and sophomoric. Anyway, there's lotsa grind on this here comp and a smidge of punk, which is basically a four way split bootleg of demo tracks from PATARENI, EXTREME SMOKE 57, SEKUNDA and PSYCHO SIN. PATARENI do a bunch of covers, EXTREME SMOKE take up a whole side with grinding mayhem, while SEKUNDA and PSYCHO SIN turn out inept blasts of hardcore from their respective demos. Pass. (MT)
(no address)

V/A – "Pain In the Big Neck" CD

This is pretty much a no-brainer—20 exclusive tracks from twenty bands on the impressive Big Neck records roster. Don't be alarmed; this is not by any means one of those throwaway label samplers that have plagued the market since the introduction of CDs into punk rock. If you're not familiar with all of these bands, you might go in for the big names like the LOST SOUNDS, the CATHOLIC BOYS, or the FUNCTIONAL BLACKOUTS, but this comp certainly has enough excellent, unreleased music for any fan of trashy, primitive punk rock to enjoy. I imagine that everyone but the ultra-nerdy will most likely walk away from this comp with a few new bands to check out. The RADIO BEATS song in particular is awesome. Put this CD on at your next party, and let Big Neck do the work for you! (GN)
(Big Neck, www.bigneckrecords.com)

V/A – "Partners in Grind" EP

Sorry, this review's gonna suck because the record was so warped that only about half of it was playable. Not that it'll make much of a difference, since this is basically four full-on death metal bands from the Sacramento area who won't have much appeal to the average *MRR* reader. But if you like death metal, most of these guys aren't bad—well KNIFETHRUHEAD is, but WORLD OF LIES, KURU and TIMES OF DESPERATION all had at least a few riffs that had my head nodding—from what I could hear. (EL)
(Buried in Hell, buriedinhell@yahoo.com)

V/A – "Ratas De Ciudad" CD

Mandatory comp covering the exploding Hispanic hardcore scene in Chicago. Following in the footsteps of the great LOS CRUDOS, these bands are taking the Chicago scene and making it their own. More than half of the tracks are sang in Spanish, and amongst the seven bands there is a wide range of sounds from the old US hardcore sounds of ESKE, and I ATTACK, the straight up punk rock of LOS JODIDOS, to the crusty hardcore of REACCION and the all out attack of NFN. It seems that Chicago is the home to the next wave of great US hardcore if this comp is anything to go by. Keep your eye on this label too. (TB)
(Southkore, 2814 S. Spalding Ave, Chicago IL 60623)

DEMOS

Send all demos to: Erin Yanke, PO Box 1113, Portland,OR 97207. Please provide a postage paid price and a mailing address with your demo! Reviews by Erin Yanke & Peter Avery.

THE ANSWER LIES has a CD of snotty punk songs. They are definitely poppy, but their fast songs maintain a certain edge that keeps them from being pop punk. The vocals are sung in a nasal style. The music is a bit sloppy, but in a way that works with the songs. One guitar is heavily distorted while the other has a twangy feel. The drummers is always upbeat and even their more hardcore songs are plenty catchy. They are one of those bands that are far from perfect but fun to listen to nonetheless. (Sixteen song CD, no lyrics included. www.theanswerlies.com) (Pete)

BED OF NAILZ thanked god on their thank you list, making them un-reviewable. Don't do this. Don't forget to include a real life address, too. Those are my only two personal demo review rules, then we've got the *MRR* review policy. Pretty simple, though. Also, you only have to send one copy of your demo. Thanks. (Erin)

BENT OUTTA SHAPE AND FRIENDS is a split demo, half by BENT OUTTA SHAPE, who are catchy, sloppy punk. Of the five songs, one has seen vinyl, two will, one's a HUSKER DU cover, and one's a JONATHAN RICHMAN cover. The "Friends" side is one song each by SIRENS, THE GOOD GOOD, MENEGUAR, MODERN MACHINES, and DRUNKEN BOAT. They are all in the same family—cousins of catchy, simple punk. This tape, however, is recorded really low, and it's hard to tell anything past that. ($1 ppd. Ten song Cassette, no lyrics included. 224 W. 35th St. #304, New York, NY 10001.) (Erin)

BODHISATTVA plays really long songs—I mean up to five minutes long—that mix grindcore with meandering, instrumental stuff. Most of the songs have short bursts of high speed grind between slower chugging parts with metal influenced, wanking guitars. The sparse vocals are a total scream. All in all, it is something like a grindcore version of THE FUCKING CHAMPS. Not bad but it tends to be a bit drawn out. (Five song CD, with lyrics, 2238 N. 24th St., Phoenix, AZ 85008, bodisattva@yeayea.com) (Pete)

BURY THE NEEDLE plays progressive rockaroll, with tons energy. There's a lot going on here, divergent rhythms, changing parts etc., but they fit it together well. The vocals are over the top, which sounds natural for this sort of thing, with a mix of snotty crooning and angsty yelling. ($5 ppd. Eight song CD, no lyrics included. 23 High Gate St., Allston, MA 02134.) (Erin)

BUSINESS OF WAR has a sweet pop song that was over before I finished reading the letter they sent! Yes, Portland *is* the new demo review capital of the Northwest, but on to the review. A sweet, lilting pop song, mid-to-slow tempo-ed, with ethereal vocals and piano bits. Nice, but drifts away. Maybe it's 'cause there was only one song. (One song CD, no lyrics included. 3119 5th Ave. #5, San Diego, CA 92103.) (Erin)

BUT NOT FORGOTTEN plays one slow dance song, and one teen angst song. Not real teens, but more like what would end up on a movie soundtrack as the teen angst song. The lady vocals are strong, and sung with heartfelt conviction. The vocals are loud in the mix, but it seems like they are the keystone that the music works around. The back-up vocals are shouted by a rabid guy. ($3 ppd. Two song CD, no lyrics included. PO Box 2570, West New York, NJ 07093.) (Erin)

DAGGERS RULE plays good solid hardcore, East Coast style. Tough guy sounding. They mix up the parts without mixing up the pace. The vocals are gravely, but sung. A good bit of work, and a drummer who hits hard, yeah! (Six song CD, lyrics included. 244 Miles Ave, Syracuse, NY 13210.) (Erin)

FEARED JAMAICAN VOODOO POSSEE has a split cassette with **MOVE REAL FAST**. FJVP plays grindy, ultra-fast thrash, with vocals like a pit bull. Lots of samples, and a DROPDEAD cover. MRF sound rabid. They have more traditionally structured songs—fast part-fast part-mosh part-fast part—and a fuzzy garage recording style. The vocals are yelled, but still hard to hear. ($3 ppd. US, $4 ppd. World. FJVP does thirteen songs, MRF does twenty-three, on cassette, no lyrics included. 11161 S. Trumbull, Chicago, IL 60655.) (Erin)

F IS FOR FIRE is kind of screamo, kind of energetic stoner rock. The complicated yet able-to-hold-a-groove rhythm section is what I'm referring to, although this is totally guitar driven. The pace is pretty strong, even in the slower parts of the songs. And the vocals? Yep, deep voiced screaming, but it sounds like he's really feelin', it. (Trade for other demos. three song CD, with lyrics. 416 NE 16th, Oklahoma City, OK 73104.) (Erin)

THE HANGOVERS mix up the anger and the melody well within the standard 3-chord structure of our culture. The vocals are sung and still spit out, carrying even more of the sentiment. ($5 ppd. seven song CD, 3614 St. Francis Drive, Wilmington, NC 28409.) (Erin)

HUMAN ORDER has some female-fronted hardcore going a la ANTIPRODUCT, but with more yelling vocals and less ranting parts. The music is solid fast and dark hardcore, with a couple slow bits and pieces—including a moment of acoustic guitar!—here and there. ($3 ppd. US, $4 ppd. World. twelve song cassette, lyrics included. 11161 S. Trumbull, Chicago, IL 60655.) (Erin)

HUNGRY GHOST plays a mixture of punk styles, some working better than others. Some of it is just strait-up, catchy punk with a pop influence. Some of it is slower and heavier, bordering on hardcore. They also have one emo-ish hardcore song. The best one on here is the street punk-styled tune that works best with the deep, monotone vocals. Not bad, but the vocals are too flat for most of what they play. (Ten song CD, no lyrics included. www.ruahungryghost.com) (Pete)

Hyper Punk Attack: Indonesian Positive Fastcore is a 4 way split demo between XPOSITIVE OUTLOOKX (who have a traditional straight edge sound), TANPAABATAS (cool thrashy and fast hardcore with sung vocals, and my favorite on the tape), STANDAR GANDA (again great thrashing hardcore) and NO TO VOILENCE. (play crazy total thrash, screaming vocals and no relief from the onslaught! Hell yeah.) This comp. has no duds on it at all, and is an amazing document of our fellow punks! Total pick of the month. ($3 ppd. US, $4 ppd. World Each of the bands do five songs on this cassette, and include lyrics! 11161 S. Trumbull, Chicago, IL 60655.) (Erin)

NAKED RUBY has primitive rock down, although this is recorded cleaner than that description implies. Stripped down rock, you can hear THE CRAMPS, THE GUN CLUB, and keyboards galore, although this band is totally based around the vocalist. Her vocals are belted out singing style. She's got a strong and great voice. (Three song CD, no lyrics included. 34 a Bonham Road, London, SW2 5HG, UK.) (Erin)

NEONASTIES rock it! They play straight forward, totally driving, energetic, snotty, and catchy punk rock. Period. It's timeless good punk, although maybe too fast to be from before the mid-80s. The vocals are also snotty, enthusiastically so! This is totally great. Second best of the month from my pile. (Eight song CD, no lyrics included. 13-1110 Odlum Dr, Vancouver, BC V5L 3L7, Canada.) (Erin)

ON THE STRINGS OF is a self-proclaimed folk/punk band. Just a guitar and a bass play catchy little acoustic tunes. The songs are sort of typical of a two man acoustic project and the vocals aren't bad but not exactly pretty. I guess the punk part comes with the lyrics. Songs about tearing down walls, and wondering what happened to all our old friends. ($5 ppd. eight song CD, lyrics included. Somberlain Records, 8215 SW 152 Ave., Apt 410, Miami, FL 33193, www.somberlain.net) (Pete)

SONOMATIC plays slow rock songs that hearken back more to the garage rock days than to punk. They are straight forward, and the vocals are not really sung, but not really spoken, either. (Four song CD, no lyrics included. 3722 Pacific Ave., Tacoma, WA 98418.) (Erin)

THE STABONES have another demo, but play the same style of no frills rocknroll. The songs seem faster this time, and the vocals are clearer and more enunciated, so you can understand them well. This sucks for having songs where they tell punks to "get a job", but for the most part fits well with what's going on. ($2 ppd. eleven song CD, no lyrics. P.O. Box 3327, Charlottesville, VA 22903.) (Erin)

TEN THOUSAND TONGUES has an interesting CD. Two songs are electronic stuff that just doesn't do anything for me. The other three are metal styled hardcore songs. They are actually done pretty well. Slow parts trudge along while guitars wank away and vocalists switch between growling, high pitched squeals, and singing. There is plenty of math and enough changes to keep you interested. (Five song CD, lyrics included, thethousandtongues@hotmail.com) (Pete)

UMIN plays crusty grindcore. You have your typical growler vs. screamer thing going on with the vocals. The songs are fast and crunchy with highly distorted guitars and quick movement of power chords up and down the fret board. The songs are played pretty well but there isn't much that makes them stand out in an overplayed style of music. (Twenty-two song CD, lyrics included, PO Box 721, Frazer, PA 19355, www.uminhateya.com) (Pete)

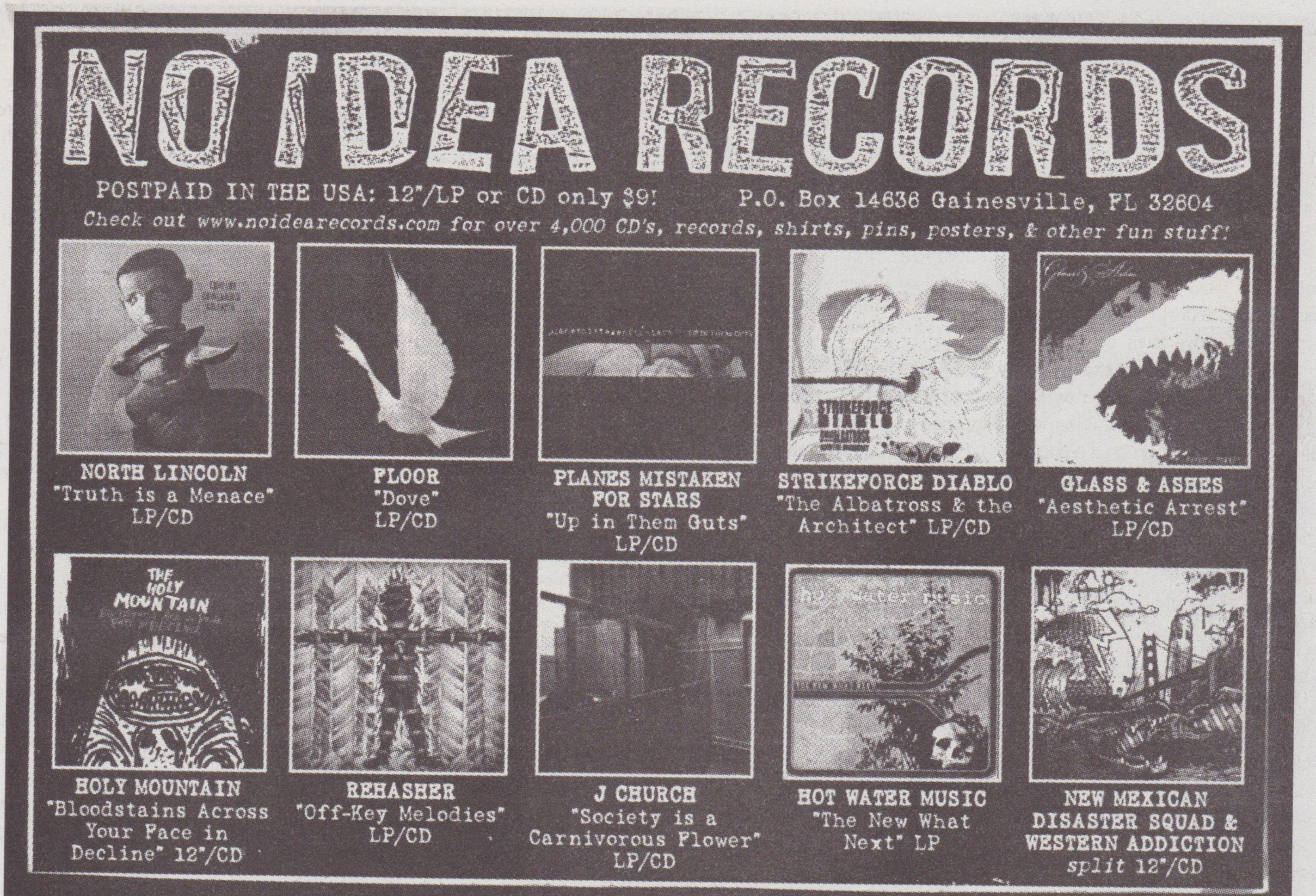
WALK THE PLANK plays hardcore without any of the tacky swashbuckling that the name implies. Aggressive and heavy with deep, throaty vocals. There are hints of a metal influence in the slow, grinding parts but there are also some slightly catchy moments. It is a bit sloppy in some of the changes, but for the most part the songs are played well. (Four song CD, no lyrics included, www.walkthouplank.co.uk) (Pete)

XANXIETY ATTACKX plays anarcho-punk, more like CONFLICT than CRASS. The guitar work is simple and has bursts of energy, the vocals sound like they're being yelled even when they're spoken. There is a lot going on with the rhythm section, but doesn't take away from the drive. Sometimes they break into the crazy thrashcore that Missoula is known for, and they do it well. The lyric booklet also includes a reprint of the whole "Anarchism: Arguments For and Against" pamphlet. ($3 ppd. Eleven song CD, lyrics included. PO Box 9263, Missoula, MT, 59807-9263.) (Erin)

XINWEI DU play awesome thrash, no room for anything but pure driving energy and anger! The vocals are shouted, with the back ups being more of the deep-throated variety. All the information is written in an Asian language that I can't read (ignorant American, me) so they give more information out than I can share with you, dear readers. But it's great.
($1 ppd. song CD, no lyrics included. 4988 Concannon Ct., San Diego, CA 92130.) (Erin)

UPPY ALEX plays some pretty energetic punk rock! It's straightforward and fast, sometimes with hooks like THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB, sometimes with crazy bass parts, and a vocal style like OPERATION IVY without being carbon copies, or clones of those uber-popular bands. I should mention right here this band is much faster than those influences, and sounds like they've got a good solid foundation in thrashcore, too, although they do have one song that's slow, and kind of painful. The vocals are ranting and rambling and totally appropriate. Good work. ($4 ppd. nine song CD, lyrics included. 1110 Sproles, Benbrook, TX 76126.) (Erin)

SAO PAULO PUNX CIRCA 1983



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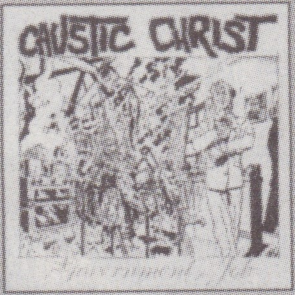

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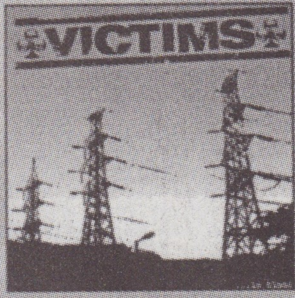

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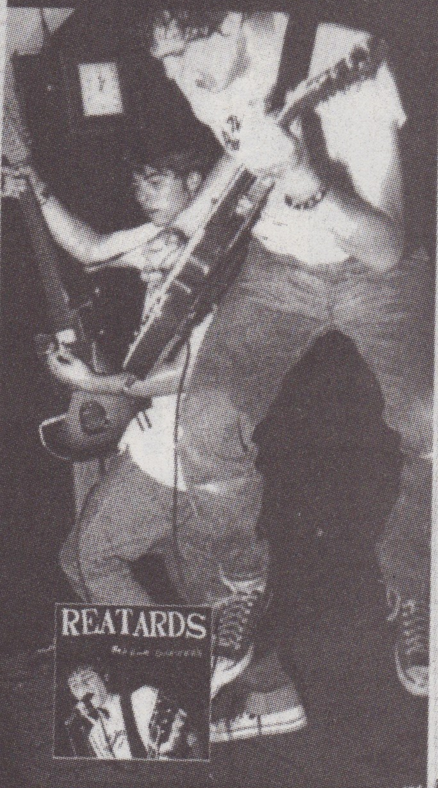

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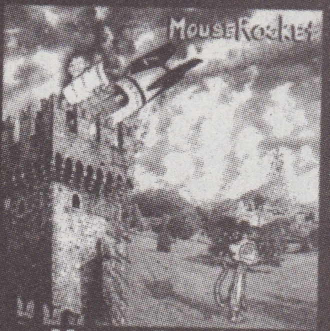

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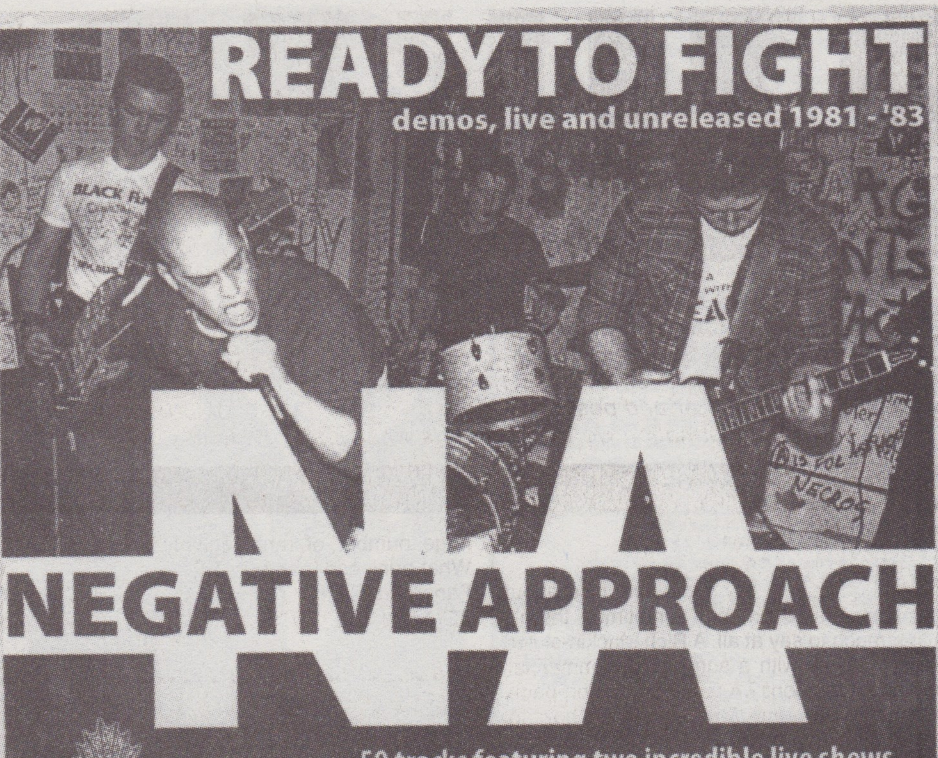

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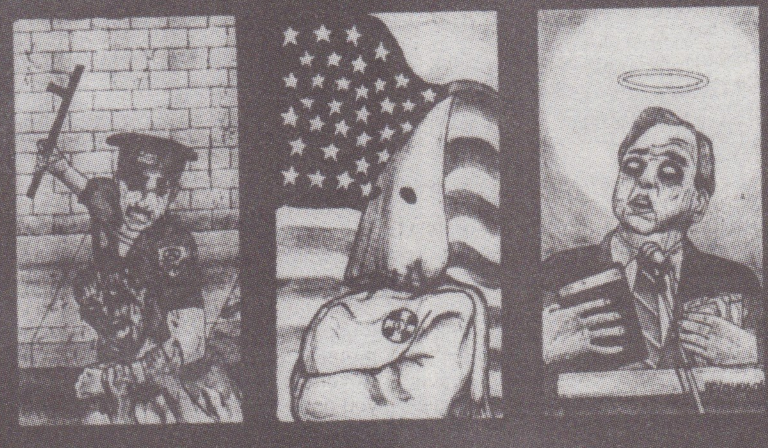

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ZINES

Reviews by: (AR) Aragorn, (JB) Julia Booz Ullrey, (MD) Mikel Delgado, (MF) Maree Faygo, (CH) Cassie Harwood, (HH) Harald Hartmann, (JM) Jeff Mason, (GN) Golnar Nikpour, (CR) Casey Ress, (CQ) Cooper Quintin, (AV) Andy Van Buren Shoup, (DS) Dionne Stevens, (MT) Mike Thorn, (ME) Melissa Toimel.

Please send your zine in for review. Write down any information you want included in the review; method of printing, number of pages, issue number and post paid price. If you want us to include a foreign post paid price, tell us. If you accept trades, tell us. The only information we will include is what you provide us.

BOMBAST! #1 / stamps
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 28 pgs
You always want to say something nice about someone's first effort, but sometimes there's just not much to say at all. A Rich Mackin-styled letter to Playtex with a suggested commercial jingle about tampons? A really bad seven-page comic that isn't funny? Directions on how to draw a kidney bean? This does not add up to a quality zine I'm sorry to say. The one funny thing was the Vote Gamera in '04 with all the reasons he was a better choice than Bush or Kerry. Well, better luck next time! (MD)
Brady King / 103 SW 197th St / Normandy Park, WA 98166
brraaadddyyyy@hotmail.com

BREAK THE CHAINS #19 / $2
8.5 x 11 - copied - 20 pgs
I have said it before and I will say it again, if you are going to do "activist" work there is very little more important than prisoner support. *Break The Chains* raises the bar by both resisting labeling themselves part of the ephemeral ABC (Anarchist Black Cross) and by (at least in the past) supporting explicitly anarchist prisoners. This made sense since the first prisoners that *Break The Chains* supported were Free and Critter who were not being supported by the prisoner support community (or ABC) at the time. Since then the politics of *Break The Chains* has moved away from its anarchist origins and towards supporting "Political Prisoners, Prisoners of War, and social prisoners" which makes their project less differentiated from the dozens of other groups doing the same sort of work. This issue of their publication has a report-back of their activities that sounds like it is establishing a baseline for writing a grant. It has quite a few pieces of writing from prisoners with varying levels of quality. There is a lengthy report on Free's legal condition. There were report backs from several "political prisoners." (AR)
PO Box 12122 / Eugene, OR 97440

CHAIRMAN OF THE BORED #22 / free
8.5 x 11 - copied - 26 pgs
For those of you who need incoherent non-sequitors to get you pumped, *Chairman Of The Bored* has got you covered. There are revolving personalities page to page to keep you on your toes, vague reflections on life behind bars, insanity dueling propriety constantly, and way-cool graphics for your eyeballs. This issue seems particularly aggressive I noted from the large number of rants against all of society. What punk can't relate? (JB)
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5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 56 pgs
Fuck yes, this zine provides a much needed break from all the computer generated crap that people call fanzines these days. Jeff crams a lot into these 56 pages, including lots of great pictures of bands like From Ashes Rise, Wolfbrigade, and Artimus Pyle, tons of reviews, a Squamish, Canada scene report, a Flagstaff, Arizona scene report, and a touching story about getting into punk rock after moving away from the former Yugoslavia by someone named Adi. I spent some time in Flagstaff this past summer, and I have to agree that as far as punk goes, it was boring as fuck, though I did find a whole load of old issues of *MRR* and *Suburban Voice* for super cheap. Anyway, as it says on the back of this zine, send hate mail or mix tapes to...(GN)
PO Box 21530 / 1850 Commercial Dr / Vancouver, BC / VSL-562 / Canada

CHUMPIRE / # 171, 172, 174 / 1 stamp or trade
8.5 x 5.5 – 8 pgs - copied, 6 pgs - 4 x 8.5 – copied, 2.75 x 4.25 16 pgs - copied
Dang, you have done 174 issues of your zine? How long have you been doing it for? Slow down man, or you are gonna get an ulcer. Or maybe I will get an ulcer in my eyeballs from straining to read your messy handwriting. I listed all three issues together cause I think its one of those zines where the reader's ability to understand it sorta depends on having read a few issues. #171 is typed and I liked it, but not just cause it was typed. It's about a punk teacher planning a curriculum for a class of middle-schoolers and teaching them how to manage and record hypothetical "bands." Sorta reminds me of the zine *On Subbing,* which is hilarious. I didn't like the other two issues that much, though. (CH)
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A DANGEROUS GAME #1 & 2 **/** $3
8 x 10.5 - copied - 57 pgs (#1) & 39 pgs (#2)
Yet another music zine out of San Francisco—compiled from various sources—all of which are credited. The two-fer-one issue- #1 flip issue over for #2 thing is cool. The choices of theme, in this case noise and indie-rockish punk, vs. metal might give *A Dangerous Game* extra staying power in the powder room, with its broader range of appeal (depending entirely upon who you are and what you like). In issue #1 are interviews with The Locust, Wolf Eyes, and John French to name only but a few. In issue *#2,* the one I found to be more interesting, is nothing but metal…not everyone's favorite—too bad! Coverage of death, black , gore metal is what you get. I found interviews are less smarmy on the side of the metalers, and I find myself "liking" who I am reading about in interviews with bands like Exhumed or Nile. I'll be looking forward to part two of the Bay Area Gore Metal Masters series as well. So, if reading band interviews is not your cup of pee, then this zine may pack only half of its intended punch. If you don't like music at all, then don't even bother. (DS)
608-C Haight St / San Francisco, CA 94117

DIG IT #32 / $6
11 x 8 - printed - 44 pgs - French

This is always one of my favorite fanzines to review. It mostly covers the garage side of punk, and as always has a humorous approach. This issue covers the artists Reigning Sound, Mike Edison, Bob Log, Little Bob, and Flyin' Brian. There are also lots of new record reviews, and the "Through The Grapevine" column. Oh yeah! There are also lots of cool photos, and the fourth installment on Rubble Records. (HH)

Armadillo / 32 Rue Pharaon / 31000 Toulouse / France
www.chez.com.digitfanzine

DOLL #208 / $?
7 x 10 - printed - 120 pgs

I don't read Japanese, so all I can do is say there are tons of cool looking ads, many reviews, a feature on Japanese girl punk bands, and I think interviews with Discharge, Death Angel and Heresy, among others. It looks great! (MD)

No 303 Aota Bldg / 3-1-9, Kita / Kohenji, Suginami-Ku / Tokyo, Japan

EARTH'S FINAL WARNING #1 / no price listed
4.25 x 8.75 - copied - 20 pgs

This SHARP-inspired publication starts of with histories of ska music and those nattily attired, loveable proles, the skins. Bands from New Hampshire, USA, Hastings, England, and the Philippines (Manila?) are profiled. There is a page in Tagalog (I think), which I believe details the current state of life in the Philippines. It closes with a cautionary tale about getting knocked up by and hooking up with a sketchy, go-nowhere guy. I liked the histories best for being quite detailed and not glossing over skins being co-opted by right-wing fucks. (JM)

cc: Michael Q Ocampo / 1221 Antipolo St, Sampaloc / Manila 1008 / Philippines

THE FURY #13 / $1
8.5 x 4.4 - copied - 24 pgs

About running around without having a job or a place to sleep so you sleep in a hidden stairway at some college and you steal shit and shit like that. (CH)

5413 6th Ave / Countryside, IL 60525

HELLFIRE FOR FUCKER #1.5 and 2 / $1
8.5 x 11 - copied - 8 and 14 pgs

There really are too few music *fan*zines out there. You know the kind, where the zine editor's sheer gusto inspires enthusiasm for the subject on the part of the reader. There is nothing like reading a zine that smacks of too many late night trips to Kinko's, hands shaking from one too many cups of coffee, fingers sticky from pasting down those last few pesky lines. *Hellfire For Fucker* is just one of those zines, and while Evan For Fucker's interests are a bit more metal than mine, this zine is hands down the best of the lot of music zines that I received this month. Both issues feature punk, hardcore, and metal reviews and interviews, and #2 features a piece on extremely obscure Japanese thrash metal bands (Aion or Zadkiel, anyone?). Hey Evan, I like Diatribe too! (GN)

Evan For Fucker / 907 1/2 E Cayuga St Upstairs / Tampa, FL 33603

HERE IT IS #2 / $1.50

Eloquence and hilarity are not often wed so brilliantly as in the language and illustration of Erin Tobey. From her elaboration of Baudrillard's theories through Friendster analysis to her metaphors on the L word, she vastly outshines her previous issue, although I do love the comics, which are more sparse this time. She paints a vivid picture of the world she sees. (JB)

Erin Tobey / PO Box 3382 / Bloomington, IN 47402

IMMIGRANTZINE #1 / free
8 x 6 - printed - 32 pgs - Greek/English

The articles written in Greek mostly cover political issues including poking fun at the Olympics. The articles in English are all on the bands featured, and new record reviews. Some of the bands included are Kanak Attack, Plague Of Happiness, and The Now Denial. I hope we get to see more of this fanzine in the future. (HH)

Plataion 13 / Thessaloniki 54249 / Greece
immigrant_zine.tk

IMPACT PRESS #53 / $2
8.5 x 11 - printed - 64 pgs

This left-liberal political magazine has been around since 1996, and in this issue they tackle rape in the military, animal abuse on college campuses, and voting in this past election. They urged me to "please vote Kerry"—sorry, *Impact Press!* Anyway, the writing and layout in this magazine are pretty lackluster, as are *Impact's* politics. Oh, and I should mention that contributors for this zine are apparently punk fans, as ads for punk records and record reviews are both featured prominently in this issue, though unfortunately *Impact's* taste in music is as tepid as their politics. Sorry, maybe we'll Rock The Vote more effectively next time. (GN)

PMB 361 / 10151 University Blvd / Orlando, FL 32817

JERSEY BEAT #76 / $3
8.5 x 11 - printed - 152 pgs

First off, it's fucking huge, with very few ads. I spent a long time just to read 80% of it. I like this zine for its longevity, but not for much else. Musically, it covers a lot of ground, but focuses on "indie-pop" and commercial rock bands that are marketed as punk (with an emphasis on locals), and I mostly really dislike that shit. Even worse, this is the "Special Politics and Punk Issue," and like you couldn't guess from the "punk" bands they cover, they advise you "get involved" by investing your time in backing candidates, contacting your representatives, et fucking cetera. The nadir is the obvious falsehood "every vote counts!" which these blind liberals see as the basis of our great society. One cheerleader for state government reports receiving "a standing ovation" from legislators after she detailed to them her need for healthcare. Ain't no round of applause gonna fix your broken leg. Big-name "punk" dudes are interviewed on these themes as well—Joey Keithley, et al. Recommended for MTV-watching Jersey-philes. (JM)

418 Gregory Avenue / Weehawken, NJ 07086
www.jerseybeat.com

LIVING PROOF #3 / $3 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 68 pgs

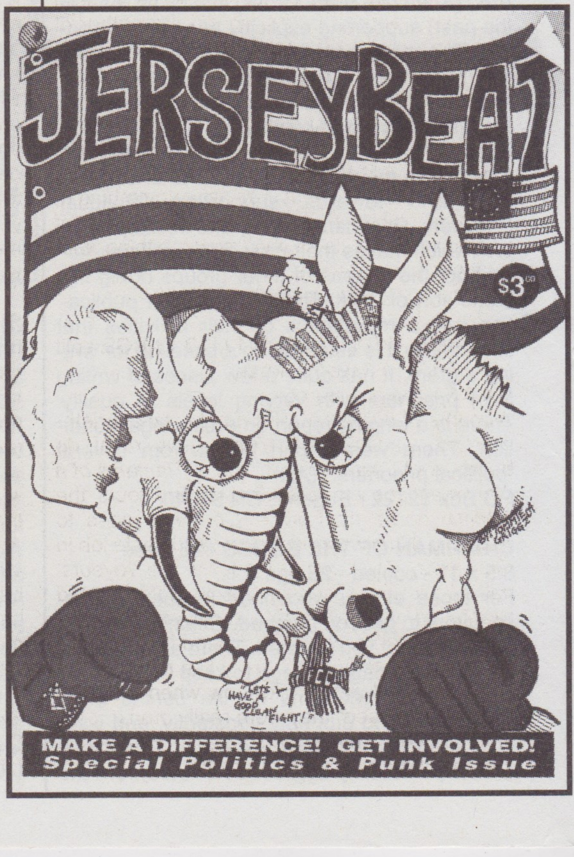
Despite the fact that Andrew includes an overly formal intro letter and the design of this essay filled document follows the annoying non-design format that seems to be so popular these days (crisp, clean, boring, page after page of just text little to no graphics etc) I actually found myself enjoying this after really sitting down and digging into its pages. I mean its overt college boy/indie rock aesthetical blandness hides some pretty quality and well thought out writing that sucks you in. It's broken down into three basic sections—one being an indictment of MTV and the reality television format, the second an fairly thorough interview with *Punk Planet*'s Dan Sinker and finally the next chapter in Andrew's tales of his trip through Europe. I really truly enjoyed this *Living Proof*—if for no other reason than its providing of snippets of a perspective outside of my own. I mean I doubt the author has ever spent an afternoon drinking wine out of a bag and listening to Discharge nor spent an evening spray painting the walls for no real reason, but Andrew is a strong writer, and an even better interviewer making this totally worth it. (MT)

PO Box 14211 / Chicago, IL 60614

NATURAL #2 / $3
8 x 6 - copied - 36 pgs - Spanish

This fanzine is hardcore. There are interviews with the bands Obni, Voice Of Hate, Esperpento, E-150, and Proyecto Terror. There are articles on GG Allin, and the farmer's movement in Brazil. There are also lots of new record reviews, plus some pretty cool comix. Finally to say there are also lots of contact addresses. This is a damn rocking fanzine. (HH)

Sergi Puig / c/ Feliu Monne 39 / 08292 Esparreguera / Barcelona / Spain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$3
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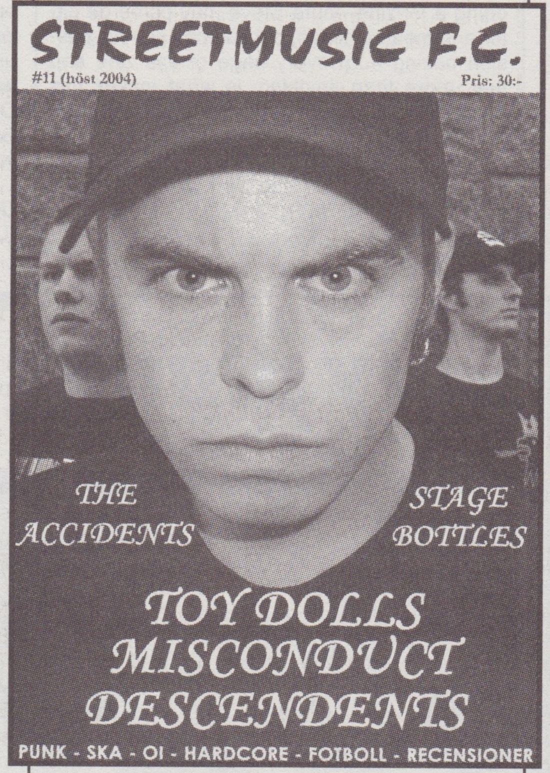
ONE MAGAZINE #1
8.5 x 7 - copied - 36 pgs
This magazine uses heavy paper stock. It dominates your impression of it. Does it use heavy stock because it has heavy content? Was there a dumpster full of this paper and the jubilant cries of "wouldn't this make a great zine!" overrode common sense? Are the creators against pliability? Against recycled content? The reason to reflect on the paper this magazine is printed on is because it is, by far, the most interesting aspect of this project. The rest is a humanist rant that ends with freedom, a rant about Kathleen Parker, another about religion, etc, etc. (AR)
Thomas Paine Redux / 5665 Faux St / Porterville, CA 93258

OX #56 / $7
11 x 8 - printed - 164 pgs - German
This fanzine is one hell of a big read. This issue has dozens of interviews including Fat Mike on Punkvoter, The Hunns, Bellrays, Spermbirds, Horrorpops, Bobbyteens, The Briefs, Poison Idea, etc…There are also articles on punk graffiti and Nico, who sang with the Velvet Underground. There are pages and pages of new record reviews, columns, lots of cool ads, and plenty of other fun reading. And as usual, this fanzine comes with a thirty song CD sampler featuring most of the bands interviewed in this issue. (HH)
PO Box 102225 / 42766 Haan / Germany
www.ox-fanzine.de

RADIX #2 / $3
11 x 14 - printed - 20 pgs
A magazine like *Radix* is really hard for me to review. On the one hand, I want to be supportive of a group of people who are working through their politics in a very public way (in this case with reviews of some of the latest leftist books from AK, rants on topical issues like Iraq and Kerry, and an interview with the author of the www.empirenotes.org blog). There is nothing wrong with that. On the other hand I would like to trash the crappy layout, generally tepid content, and bland opinions presented in this magazine. Where I guess I end up is to say that sometimes it is more important for a group of people who believe that they have something to say to possibly join up with another group of people who may be saying the same thing, with a bit more experience. (AR)
PO Box 3312 / Warrenton, VA 20188

REMAINS OF A CAVEMEN / GO LARGE split / £1.50 UK / $3 world / trade
6 x 8.5 - copied - 50 pgs
A couple of English blokes put this zine together—that is actually two. These guys travel, do bands, and attend tons of shows. *Remains of a Caveman* goes to Scandinavia and tours the English home front while *Go Large* goes to Australia. Nice work on that cut and paste job in *Go Large.* This double-header is the voyeurs' delight because the authors are both dedicated to retelling their personal—social experiences, and they are fine at it. So, I hope it isn't weird for me to mention that I really like much of the British select wording; like how when they say they were "pissed" they were really drunk … It's cute. So yea, there's plenty of that in this zine too, making it good for a once through, but not really a re-reader if you *know* what I mean. (DS)
Adam / 18 Brangwyn Drive / Patcham Brighton / Ease Sussex BNI8XD / England



S.C.A.L.P. #3 - $2
4.25 x 11 - copied - 24 pgs
Were the writer of this zine to die, an autopsy would reveal an abnormal plethora of nerve endings grown together in his brain, showing that he learned a lot very quickly. He has successful traveled some peninsulas in Europe and lived to tell. His stories are funny, quirky and sharp. He often considers existentialism without a clear understanding of what it is. I only wish that his vignettes were not so brief and disconnected. Next time I hope that he delves deeper into what he references so often to be the ultimate untimely incidence of that which is "random, arbitrary and inevitably meaningless." (JB)
www.parcellpress.com

SHORT, FAST, & LOUD / $4
8.5 x 11 - printed - 88 pgs
I buy every issue of this so it's not hard for me to review. It's a music zine; the writers are mostly real sharp and informed, the photographs look great. There are a ton of reviews, which are unsigned and, perhaps coincidentally, extra-snotty at times. I even like the ads. Interviewed this time are Cattle Decapitation, Anne of the Armageddon label and store, Vilently Ill, and a series of short ones with bands made up of teenagers. This isn't their best issue, but it was plenty good enough for me. (JM)
225 Lincoln Ave / Cotati, CA 94931

SHREDDING PAPER #18 / $3
8.5 x 11 - printed - 88 pgs
I think that *Shredding Paper* is one of the better music review-oriented magazines out there Many of the reviews are really descriptive, and the musical styles covered are quite a bit broader than *MRRs*—including lots of indie rock, pop, and a few mainstream records too. The interesting thing in reading this is seeing how out of control the reunion and reissue trend is nowadays. Anyways, there are also interviews with Hang on the Box and Clinton Heylin, and a political editorial from *Shredding Paper* chief and former *MRR* columnist, Mel. (MD)
PO Box 2271 / San Rafael, CA 94912
www.shreddingradio.com

SMASHED IMAGES #2 / 1 Euro plus postage
8.5 x 11.5 - printed - 14 pgs & leaflet
Smashed Images is a very political zine out of Holland offering the latest in leftist views a la punk Europe. I especially liked the reviewers' wit, as I am without mine at this cold dark hour. This is the kind of material an eager person can learn from. I felt like I did. The Attila The Stockbroker interview is good stuff, and the band interviews will surely appeal to street punks and fans thereof. The color scheme was the only thing that made me feel uncomfortable. It's red and blue ink, neatly printed on white paper. I guess if those are the only colors you've got then stamp it on, but it just made me wonder if that should even matter. It just goes to show how personal taste is; so you decide…when you read this zine. (DS)
Paul / PO Box 1184 / 6501 BD / Nijmegen / Holland
www.rock againstreligion.org

SMOKESCREEN #1 / trade or stamps
8.5 x 5.5 - copied - 16 pgs
"Man, I smoked, like, so many cigarettes and also drank so much coffee, George Bush is an asshole. Look at this picture I took of this garbage can with this sick stencil I had done on it. Politics politics blah blah blah..." Reading this zine was like reading one of the thousands of mailboxes or telephone poles in Berkeley that's been graffitied by one of the thousands of kids who hang out on Telegraph street all day asking me for money for weed or beer. It's got mundane shit written all over it like, "the war stinks," "skool sucks," "parents suck"...I mean, thanks for telling me that man, but I've known that since like 1995 when I was nine. (CH)
fuzztooth@hotmail.com

STAY GOLD #7 / $1
4.25 x 5.5 - copied - 40 pgs
This is really cool—a small format zine chocked full of goodness featuring interviews with the Short Bus Kids, Crap Records plus tons of honest heartfelt personal and political writing. My favorite being his tale of working on the docks and trying deal with the stupid hardline dogmatic communists who were trying to dictate the terms of a strike. Handwritten and totally personable. (MT)
4004 Warwick #2N / Kansas City, MO 64111

STREETMUSIC F.C. #11 / $4
11 x 8 - printed - 36 pgs - Swedish
This quarterly fanzine covers the genres of punk, ska, oi, hardcore, and soccer. Included in

this issue are articles on the bands The Accidents, Stage Bottles, Toy Dolls, Misconduct, Descendents and the Pauki. Also included are lots of new record reviews and plenty of ads. (HH)

Stefan Fels Gruvgangen 21 / 65343 Karlstad / Sweden
Email: Stefan_fels@hotmail.com

SWEET OLIVE #2 / 3 Euros
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 48 pgs

An excellent zine put together because Natalia, the editor, moved away from New Orleans only to feel the effects of the kind of broken heart that comes with leaving the city that you love. The contents of this zine are comprised of a number of interviews done with New Orleans DIY-ers, who were part of the reason Natalia loved NoLa in the first place. Included are interviews with Shelley, the amazing woman who does *Chainsaw* zine, GK Darby, who runs Garrett County press, Joe of does Microcosm publishing, along with other zinesters, activists, and generally interesting people. Overall, this was an excellent overview of what makes DIY what it is—on the one hand, there is the joy and pleasure in putting your blood, sweat, and tears into a project you truly believe in, and on the other hand there is the constant crunch of making ends meet while going against the mainstream grain. In particular, it was interesting to read the thoughts of those who have been involved in DIY culture for a long time; it was particularly compelling to read everyone's answer to the question, "Would you still be doing this if you won the lottery tomorrow." Kudos to Natalia and her interviewees for putting together thoughtful questions and answers that should resonate with any committed punk rocker. Extra points for the strong regional focus and commitment—keep up the good work, everyone! (GN)

Natalia / 17 Railway Rd / Dalkey County / Dublin, Ireland

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #176 / 177 / 178 / trade
8 x 6 - printed - 32, 28, 40 pgs - Finnish

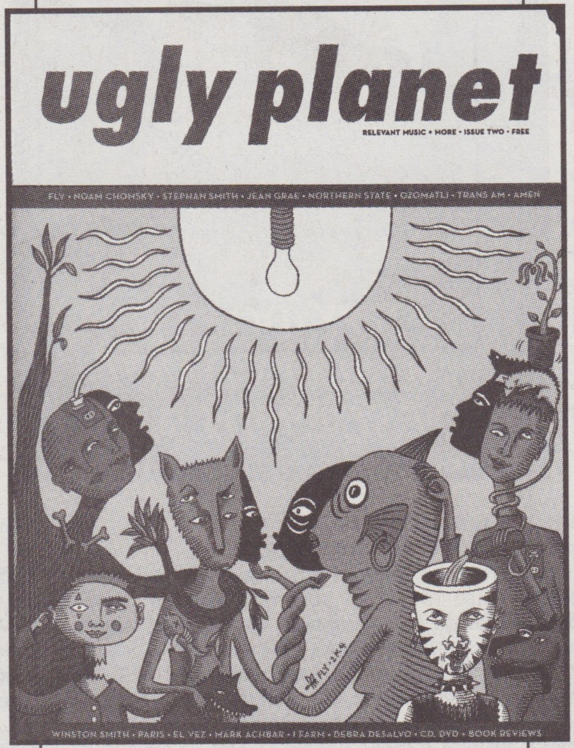
176 forgot to be reviewed last month, sorry about that. In this issue the cover features the band Akupuntio, whose members are all twelve or thirteen years old. The second issue features pictures of punks on bicycles at the K-Town Fest with an accompanying article. There is also a report about some punks who toured Central Europe. In the latest issue it is reported that Stig the singer of Icons Of Filth passed away of heart failure after doing a gig. He will surely be missed by all of us. In this issue there are the usual record reviews, and a couple of band interviews including Extaasi, and Suruaika. If one is interested in the Finnish scene this fanzine is an absolute must. (HH)

PO Box 1 / 65200 Vaasa / Finland
Email:jantsa@yahoo.com

TOWN OF HARDCORE #10 / $1
8.5 x 11 - copied - 28 pgs

For the unfamiliar, *Town Of Hardcore* remains one of the finest fanzines going dedicated to *real* hardcore. Smart, moderately controversial and just plain well done. This issue features interviews with Get Real, Iron Boots, Drug Test, Justice, an Articles Of Faith reprint, a Think I Care tour diary, a feature on Japanese hardcore, and a report back from this years Posi Numbers Fest. My favorite part was his tips on doing a fanzine—sure Steve may come off bitter and mean at times, but you can see his passion oozing from every page of this zine and that, more than anything, is what makes this such a compelling read. So Steve doesn't want you to send him money anymore for his zine, so its going to take a bit of work to track this down, but for those of you into da core its certainly worth your while. (MT)

No address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THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #71 / $1
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 52 pgs

As reliable a clockwork, here's another issue of *The Trouble with Normal*. This time, Boone treats us to lots of show reviews of mostly indie-leaning bands (Hella, Quails, !!!, and Tracy and the Plastics are all covered herein, as are From Ashes Rise and Strike Anywhere), interviews with Beauty Pill and The Syndicate, and some CD and record reviews. There's also a brief section of thoughts on this years election season, though it predates the election itself. Again, my advice to Boone would be to experiment with new layouts to spice up the aesthetic of this zine—I know that aspect of *The Trouble With Normal* has been remarked upon before in these pages, but it remains a fact word-documents-as-zine-layouts get stale fairly quickly. (GN)

Boone / PO Box 329 / Columbia, MO 65205

TRUST #108 / $4
11 x 8 - printed - 68 pgs - German

As usual, there is lots of punk rock in this long-standing fanzine. In this issue there are interviews with bands Truth North, The Thermals, Agoraphobic Nosebleed, and The Sainte Catherines. There are some columns and a special interview with Andreas Bethmann, a controversial fellow who has been involved with punk bands and films. Finally, there are lots of cool ads, lots of new record reviews, and as usual the best gig listing for Germany anywhere. (HH)

Dolf Hermannstaedter / PO Box 110762 / 28087 Bremen / Germany
www.trust-zine.de

UGLY PLANET #2 / $4
8.5 x 11 - printed - 68pgs

Pretty professional (maga)zine from New York which covers "relevant music & more." Fly does the full color cover, which is always cool to see as I love her crazy style and this issue features a brief albeit well done interview with her. Also included are interviews with Noam Chomsky, Winston Smith, El Vez, I Farm, Paris and more. The interviews are all well done and interesting—I especially enjoyed the piece with long time collage artist Winston Smith, as his wit and politics seem to be still just as sharp as his razor. This is free in New York. (MT)

PO Box 205 / New York, NY 10012
www.uglyplanet.com

UNIDAD PUNK LIBERTARIA / $1
14 x 12 - printed - 16 pgs - Spanish

This fanzine represents the more political side of punk. There are some pretty interesting articles on prisoners, and liberation struggles in Latin America. There is a band interview with Migra Violenta. Check out their record covers! Overall, this fanzine tells one that Mexican punk has a sharp edge. Also included for fifty cents more is a political broadsheet with some more articles on prisons and prisoners. (HH)

Enrique Lazcano / 1007E Runberg Lane Apt 128 / Austin TX. 78753
Upl_idir@yahoo.com.mx

VILE DOMINION / HOMOSAPIEN=DISEASE #2.5 / $2 or trade
5.5 x 8.5 - copied - 24 pgs

Here we have a well-paired split zine from two mad punx and thrashers. The *Vile Dominion* side starts off with a brief tour diary from the editor outlining his three-day jaunt with Envenomed, and flows nicely into a well-done "how-to" guide for putting on successful DIY shows. There are record and book reviews as well, though I had a bit of a chuckle at the male teen angst book selections; how many existential crises have been buoyed by reading Al Burian, Albert Camus, or Charles Bukowski, I wonder? On the flipside we have *Homosapien=Disease,* which features a funny interview with Japanese thrashers Mind of Asian, lots of grindcore references, and enthusiastic record reviews. Overall, the DIY ethic, above-average writing, and cut'n'paste layout makes this split a winner, though the full color cover doesn't work quite as well as I bet these chaps hoped it would. (GN)

2237 Stratford Ave #2 / Cincinnati, OH 45219

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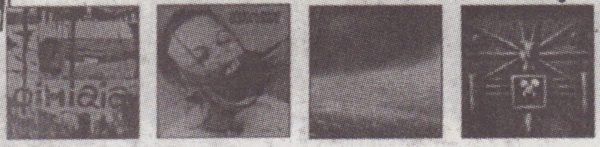

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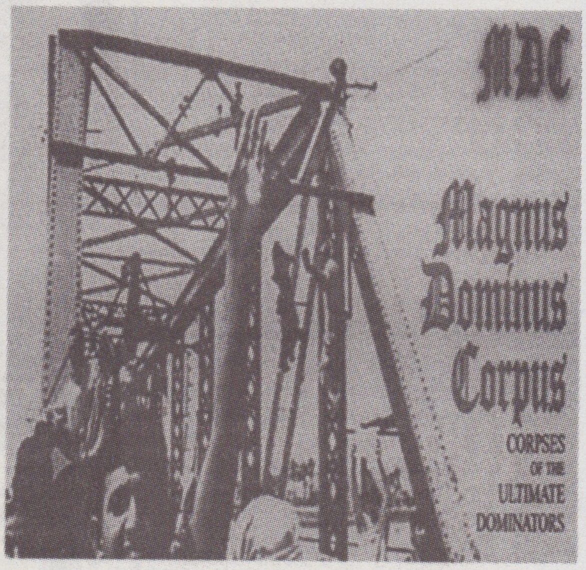

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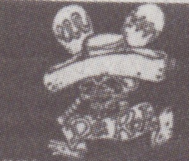

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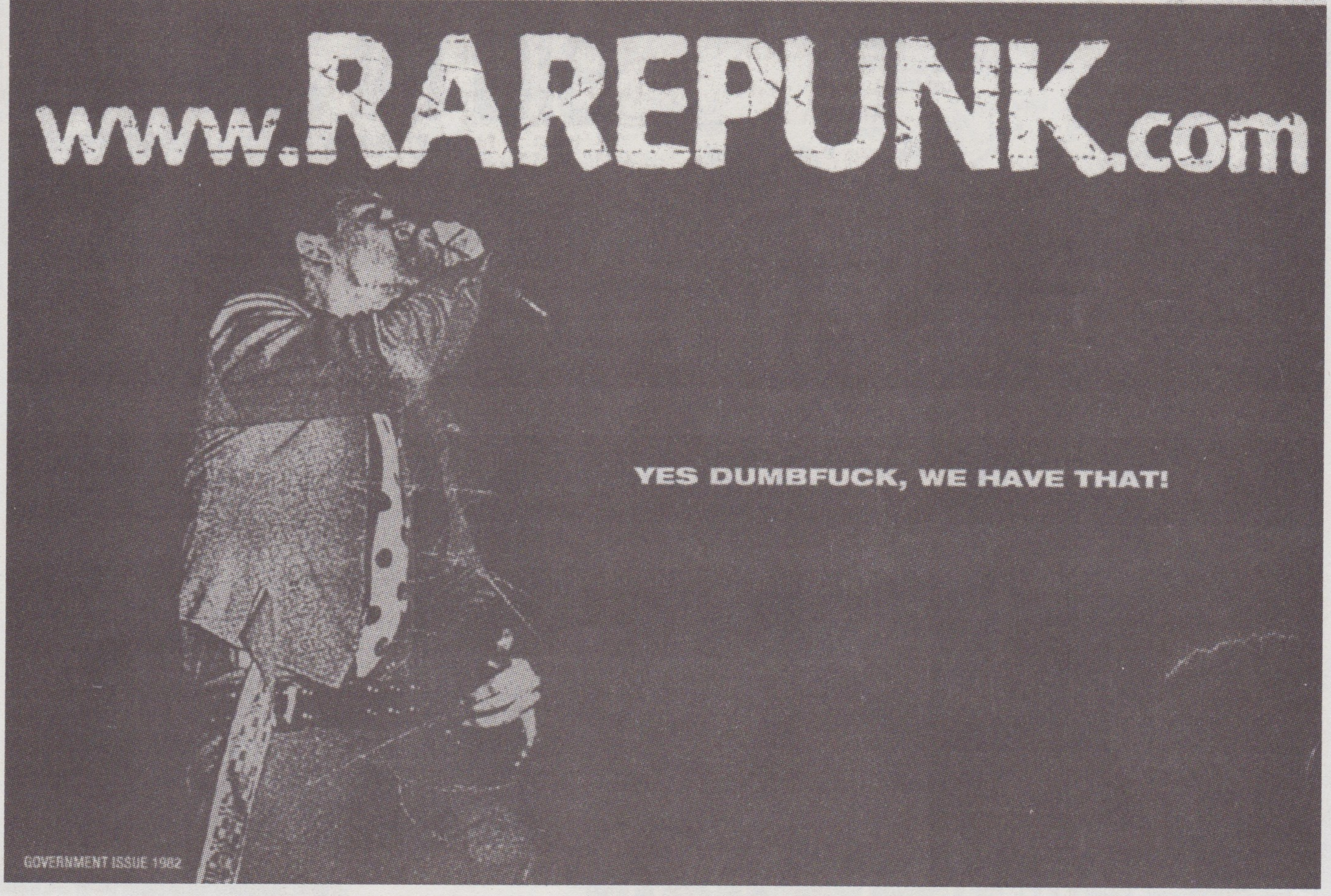
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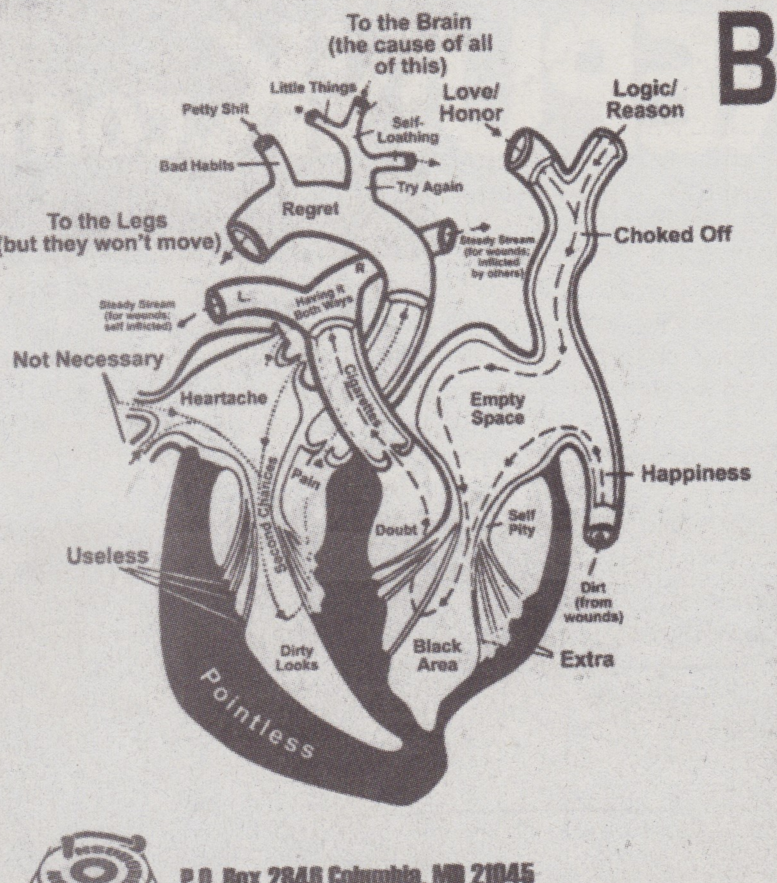
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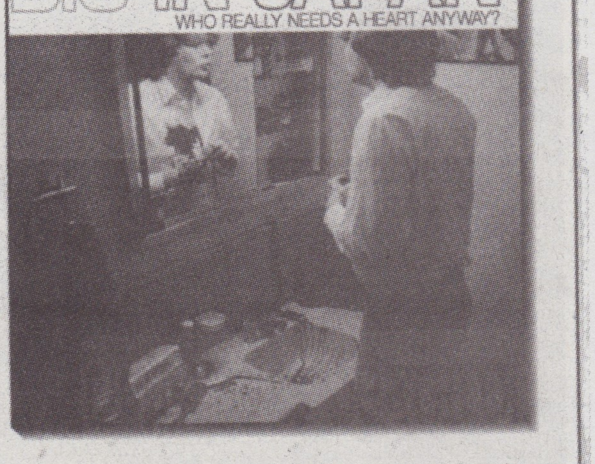
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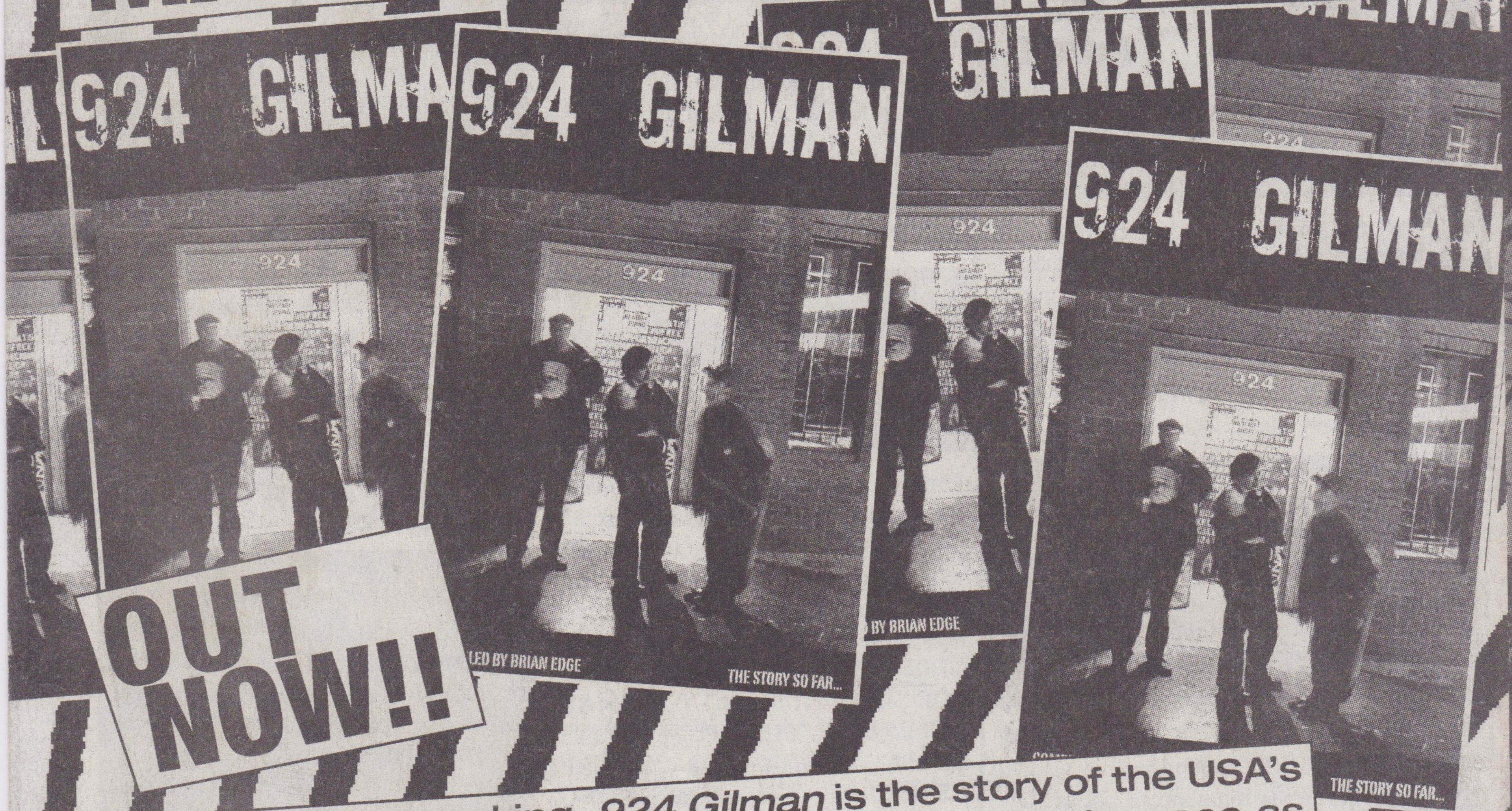
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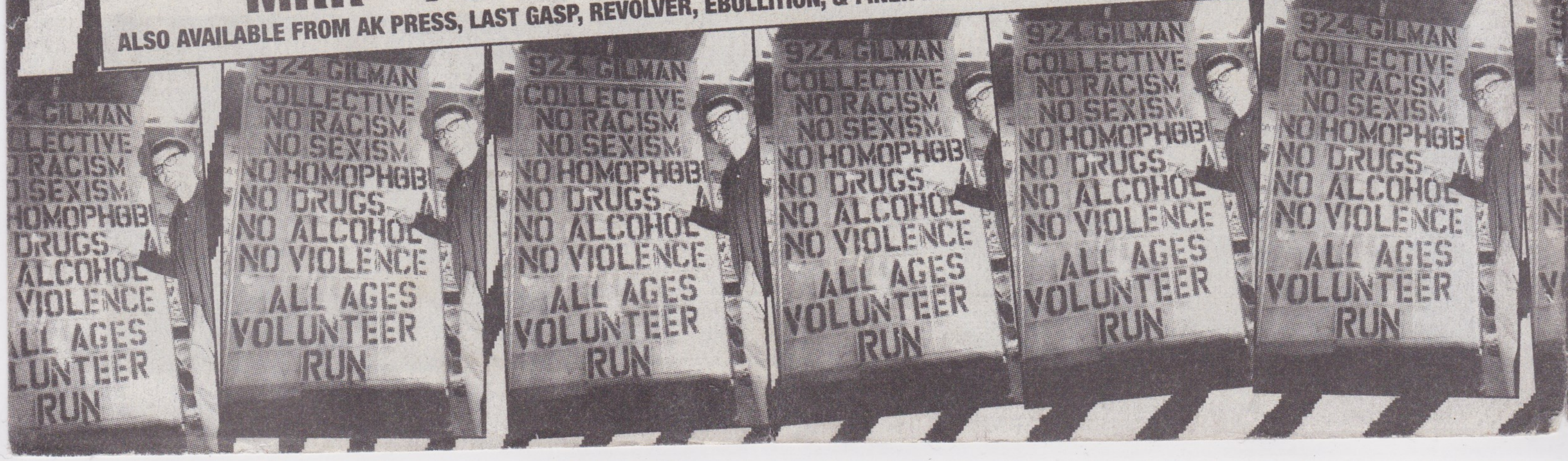
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